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A BOOKMAN'S DAYBOOK

A BOOKMAN'S DAYBOOK

By
BURTON RASCOE

*Edited with an
Introduction by C. Hartley Grattan*

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FOR WORD

ea of getting book together was Mr. Grattans, not my own theless I think it was a good idea. For here is authentic record, insofar as my capacity for seeing, hearing and recording goes, of such aspects of the contemporary scene in New York of five and six years ago as I was aware of and in contact with. And as such it is a reflection of at least some aspects of our culture of the period.

When Mr. Grattan presented me with the manuscript he had prepared by going through old files of the New York *Herald-Tribune* the other day, I had forgotten or half-forgotten quite a bit of the material Mr. Grattan thought fit to include; and so, what with seeing even the material I remembered through the haze that five or six years will create over the exact phrasing of any piece of writing, it was pretty much like reading the work of another person.

I was struck particularly with the sanguine enthusiasm of this Burton Rascoe of five or six years ago and with his rather breath-taking anxiety to get glimpses of his contemporaries, records of what they were talking about, ideas they were expressing, and impressions of his own down on paper, for all the world as though he imagined that a cataclysm might destroy that world he lived in at any moment and that he was making light the labors of some future archeologists and historians. This impression I have of him as taking his mission seriously permits me

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to understand the fellow's audacity. He was not only irreverent toward many of the revered ones of his time; he was not only frankly unimpressed by many reputations upheld with a sort of awe: he actually broke some of the laws of hospitality. That is if some mediocrity, avid for publicity, invited him to lunch, he accepted the invitation and did not hesitate to report verbatim whatever banalities his host uttered. In some of these instances I notice faint traces of malice, which was, I suspect, his way of emphasizing by humorous relief the peculiar quality of his host's mind. This faithfulness to the record, as I remember, caused him numerous difficulties, none of which ever seemed to feaze him. In short I should not now be able to write much of the stuff I have written herein, at least not in the same manner and with the same fidelity to observation and impression. For I have now grown more "sophisticated," that is I know so much about American and European celebrities from contact and from gossip that the only safe place for me to discuss them is under elaborate disguises in fiction.

There are many bits from the "Daybook" which I should have selected which Mr. Grattan has not and he has selected some that I should not have included; but I have no doubt that the book is better on that account. Also I have forbore to change the record as it was originally written even when it seems to me that the young fellow who wrote it was talking through his hat.

BURTON RASCOE.

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INTRODUCTION

BURTON RASCOE has always appealed to me, so long as I have been literarily conscious, as one of the truly worth-while critics of the day, and it is not too difficult for me to say why. He seems more responsive to the significant literary currents of the time than any other single man whose vocation is literature, and he is the critic who has responded most satisfactorily to the varied aspects of what Oswald Spengler has called megalopolitan culture.

In 1800 William Wordsworth wrote in the first preface to "The Lyrical Ballads" (the preface which gave rise to many impassioned controversies about the subject matter and diction of verse) a sentence that I presume passed unnoticed at the time, but which can be read to-day as a fulfilled prophecy. He wrote: "If the labors of men of Science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself." Now, in spite of the complaints of writers like J. B. S. Haldane, it is pretty evident that the poets have not lagged too far behind the advances in science; and if we transfer our investigation to the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture we find that there has been a steady and

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fruitful interplay between science in its pure and applied aspects and the practice of the arts. Needless to say, prose fiction shows the completest correlation between the conditions of modern life—which are, in so far as they are unique, the product of a technology largely created since Wordsworth's day—and the product of the artist. It is bringing into criticism the forces that have transformed our lives and our arts that I find the most interesting aspect of Rascoe's work.

No man with whose writings I am acquainted quite so completely gives me a sense of the modern age while he is still dealing chiefly with literature. It is even possible to localize Rascoe's unique quality still more exactly and say that he is, because of, rather than in spite of, his having been born in Kentucky and educated in Oklahoma and Chicago, the epitome of the New York literary spirit. One would be hard put to it to define explicitly that spirit, for into it enter compository elements as diverse as one can imagine. Its elements are as diverse as the peoples who live on Manhattan Island. Konrad Bercovici made a trip around the world in New York and it is almost possible to make a trip round the cultural world in Rascoe's writings. That is not to say that there are not deficiencies in his equipment or that he does not emphasize certain aspects of culture to a disproportionate extent, but on the whole the range of his interests is sufficiently inclusive to be rather remarkable.

Among the more significant aspects of New York life (and indeed of the life of any large city) is the decay of leisure, for which is substituted a certain hecticness both in work and play, and a tendency to take everything on the fly. There is a distinct tendency to live in the headlines of life, so to speak. In proportion as one is

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sensitive to such matters, there is also a tendency to be swept away from one's deeper and more permanent moorings, which are dominant in semi-urban and rural life, by the ease with which one can live in complete oblivion of the ebb and flow of the seasons as they find expression in planting and harvesting, the variations of the weather, and by the apparent divorcement of what you are for the time being doing, from the "struggle for existence." Some of the interpreters of Spengler would have us believe that he has stigmatized the psychic state produced in the more intelligent experiencers of such a life, as disintegrative and disastrous. It has always been my impression that it is very wrong to read Spengler from a moralistic standpoint, if we are to read him profitably, and I prefer to take his analysis in the spirit that one takes an analysis in chemistry: It explains a condition that exists. Consequently, when I say that Rascoe appears to me an excellent exemplar of the megalopolitan spirit, I am far from desiring to disparage him. I intend my remark to be a compliment. And I should like to point out that his origins prevent him from evidencing any of the disintegrating results, actual or theoretical, of complete detachment from the environment to which the human race has longest been subjected: the rural environment.

It seems to me necessary to indulge in such profundities to explain my conception of Rascoe's social significance, in spite of the fact that I am acutely conscious that there are many of Rascoe's friends who will regard my attempted profundity as little short of ridiculous. But once his social significance has been made clear it is possible to approach him with much more understanding than would be the case if one abruptly assumed that he

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was merely an entertaining writer for the newspapers, with perhaps more literary discrimination than most.

Rascoe, as one will discover on reading this "Daybook," lived an extremely active life during the period of its composition. He was fortunately so situated as to receive the impress of a diversity of literary and social currents. In his "Daybook" he recorded what he did, what people he met, what he read and what they read, and what was being said. It is hardly necessary to point out that such a record is of considerable importance, for in it there was bound to be reflected the spirit of the times, if nothing else. The quality of the record, which I believe to be high, is the product of Rascoe's peculiar ability to seize upon the significant statement, to say the incisive thing, and to record the crucial fact, a talent that is closely related to reporting. In one of its many aspects, the "Daybook" is superlatively fine reporting.

More importantly, however, it served as an outlet for a fine, alert and discriminating intelligence. Into it for over two years Rascoe poured all that was best in him and the best is very fine indeed. He oriented his whole range of thinking around the record he made from day to day. Since Rascoe entered into the life of New York City with the zest of an outlander, the record he made of what he did, saw, heard and thought, is intimately related to the peculiar qualities of city life. The record was made on the fly and Rascoe was fortunate indeed in being possessed of a flexible and fluent written English, a gift which made it possible for him to catch in words the essence of his experiences. Since the "Daybook" was written under such conditions, the individual entries are short, pithy and designed to bring out the high lights. An extended entry is a rarity. So, too, a large percentage of the entries di-

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rectly reflect the social life of literary people. We rarely see them at work and frequently see them at play or conversation, though there is constant enough reference to their accomplished or planned work. Similarly, when Rascoe has occasion to deal with a book the chances are very good that it was read in brief and scattered intervals and rapidly rather than, as reading was done in the old days, in the fullness of leisure and with plenty of time to savor the more subtle qualities of a writer.

These facts, I believe, explain Rascoe's responsiveness to all that is new in literature. He is so responsive to his surroundings that he quickly recognizes the appearance of the spirit of the times in letters. If it be objected that the advocacies 'for which he is chiefly known—his advocacies of Dreiser, Cabell and T. S. Eliot—seem based on no particular standard of judgment, I should point out in rebuttal that Rascoe has always shown himself an eclectic and that in each of these men, if viewed from the correct angle, there is a common quality: They are all instinct with life. And if it be further objected that these three men—others might have been selected—do not reflect in any obvious way the same kinds of life, I should reply that that is true, but consider the facts that in Dreiser it is possible to discover at work the social forces that created the social situation of which Rascoe is so peculiarly a product; that Eliot has expressed the emotional and intellectual disillusion that is the end-product of such a life, especially after a devastating war; and that Cabell's work is an effort to escape the restrictions of such a life into a finer and less hampering world, and as such is perforce as closely related to it as Dreiser's photographic rendering of its actualities.

To his "Daybook" Rascoe brought tremendous stores

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of knowledge. I do not think it wise to call him a scholar. When he enters a field where his information is scanty, his capacity for logical thinking and for the application of common sense to the problems involved, prevents him from falling into any grotesque errors of judgment. His learning, as contrasted with his life and spirit, is not entirely contemporary, but encompasses the whole range of literature, as the reader will discover when he comes to the opening piece of this book, "The Dead Give-Away." From this same record one will discover, also, that whether Rascoe be evaluating the classic writers, the traditional moderns, or the radical moderns, his preference is always for writers who are instinct with life. It is a rare time indeed that Rascoe gives his preference to a writer whose value is *purely* literary. At the same time, it is necessary to note that Rascoe is sensitive to æsthetic qualities and that he is not apt to be taken in by the *faux-bon*, either in literature or life. It is not possible to state, however, that he has never made a mistake or that he lacks prejudices. If it were possible to do so I, for one, would be much interested in discovering what was the matter with Rascoe.

Rascoe's knowledge, and his passion to increase it, are both prettily illustrated time and again in the pages that follow. Not only is he tremendously interested in acquiring information about books, and in making himself *au courant* with the latest thinking, but he indulges to the full his curiosity about people. I doubt that the "Day-book" would have half the interest that it has if Rascoe's curiosity had been curtailed. Rascoe is a student of personalities, great and small, and his glimpses, sketches and full length portraits, whether judicial or satirical, add much zest to his record. He is rarely, it will be noticed,

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satisfied with the book. He must get at the man behind it, and it is worth while noting that his sketch of the man is likely to be as honest as his critique of the book.

Taking it all in all, it does not seem to me that Rascoe has missed crowding into his "Daybook" all the qualities that make for interest; and since he is possessed of a modern, sophisticated, inquiring and reasonably dispassionate mind, and gifted with an excellent, straightforward style, the "Daybook" cannot fail to bring clearly before the reader the more significant literary currents of the period from April, 1922, to August, 1924. And happily Rascoe's interests are not purely literary. His curiosity overflows into all fields that a layman may reasonably be expected to enter. He seeks light wherever it may be found, and reports its significance as clearly as any one I know.

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In editing the "Daybook" for publication in book form I have endeavored to preserve the contemporaneity and spontaneity of the record by retaining the dates of the items and printing the matter as it was written, even when it is obvious to the moderately well-informed person that the whole situation Rascoe is reporting has changed. Consequently, there are many authors whose writings Rascoe considers whose importance has increased or decreased as the result of later work. It is interesting to note that Rascoe discussed with insight many writers long before they became generally known. I should suggest that the reader use this fact as an index to Rascoe's discernment. And I should further suggest that the reader note that in "The Dead Give-Away" Rascoe states that he is far most interested in getting a hearing

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for a new writer than in touting for an old-established figure. He was one of Cabell's earliest admirers; he fought for T. S. Eliot from the beginning; and Dr. Isaac Goldberg has found that he was one of the first to write an extended paper on H. L. Mencken.

Those who followed the "Daybook" when it originally appeared in *The Herald-Tribune* will undoubtedly search for passages that they remember as peculiarly interesting. If they do not find them, I should like them to recall that the memory is a tricky thing and that passages they have in mind may be surrounded by a rosy haze in their minds, and really would not bear reprinting here. I have read the entire "Daybook" in the space of a few weeks, and have to the best of my ability taken the cream off it. I have endeavored to include as great a diversity of notes as possible to exhibit all facets of Rascoe's mind. I hope the readers of the "Daybook" in its present form will agree with my conception of cream.

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN.

NEW YORK CITY,
December 15, 1928.

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THE DEAD GIVE-AWAY*

SINCE I shall perform in these pages the function of a critic, I take it to be admirably to the point to catalogue some of the items in my credo. For I think it essential to orient the minds of one's readers as early as possible in one's tastes and prejudices that they may know just how far they wish to go with him, how much they may take for truth and valid judgment and how much for personal shortcomings, deficiencies and ignorance. A critic must be heeded by his clientèle or he is nothing; and by "heeded" I mean that though it is permitted to disagree with him, his readers should not regard what he has to say as wholly unimportant. It may be unimportant, mind you, but the critic and his readers should take no knowledge of that fact. I shall not, at any rate. I propose then to lay a few of my cards on the table. This is, I know, a dangerous thing to do; and if you will think back over the critics and reviewers of your acquaintance you will recall few who have anticipated my example. One of the first rules most critics seem to make for themselves is: Never give yourself away. But omniscience and infallibility are not among the attributes I claim for myself. So attend:

Mr. Rupert Hughes, during the brilliant left-handed advertising campaign he conducted in my behalf, told his many audiences that I reserve my highest praise for men who are almost unknown and that I neglect them when they gain a large following. He meant the charge

* Written in 1922.

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to be deadly, for he thinks that to do this is reprehensible. I do not refute the charge. I agree that what he says is, in a measure, true; and I am rather proud of it. It is the pleasure if not the function of a critic to help create values, or, at all events, to direct attention to little known men if he thinks the work of these men merits praise and a larger audience. Once they are established he neglects them only in so far as he is occupied with making new discoveries.

I find no urge to join the present torchlight procession for Sherwood Anderson—though I am glad to see it, for I think he is one of our indubitable geniuses—because I had one of my own (with many jeers from the same people who are now in the procession) for Mr. Anderson several years ago. I derive a certain amusement from the fact that at least five American authors whom I praised four years ago when they were *bêtes noires* to reviewers are now to them sacred cows. I have the utmost confidence that time will justify my estimate of the following prose artists and poets from whom reviewers and readers shy: Maxwell Bodenheim, Ben Hecht, Frank Moore Colby, Kenneth Burke, Amory Hare, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Henry Blake Fuller and Alfred Kreymborg.

I am interested in every attempt to bring variety and flexibility into our media of expression, but I am not (and precisely on that account) an enemy of the classics. I read by preference, even to modern literature, Homer, Aristophanes and Æschylus, the Greek comic and epigrammatic poets; Lucian, Herondas, Catullus, Propertius, Petronius; Congreve, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Thomas Dekker, Sir Thomas Browne, Robert Burton, Dryden, Swift, Hazlitt, Keats, Browning, Patmore, Beddoes and

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Francis Thompson; and among the French: Renan, Molière, Racine, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère, Vauvenargues, Villon, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Laforgue, Corbière, France and Remy de Gourmont. Among the classics and classical writers I care nothing for are: Virgil (except the Eclogues, which I haven't read in ten years), Euripides, Horace, Beowulf, Froissart, Dr. Johnson, "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained," the "Henriade," "Orlando Furioso," "The Luciad," Addison and Steele, Alexander Pope, Macaulay, Southey, Byron, Wordsworth and Lowell. I think that both Tennyson and Longfellow are as much underrated now as they were overrated in their lifetime, and that they were both extraordinary technicians with a thin but authentic lyrical gift.

The books I reread (not in toto, but in part) with the greatest frequency are: "The Anatomy of Melancholy," "The Crock of Gold," "Jurgen," Lucian's "Dialogues of the Gods," "The Deipnosophists," by Athenæus, France's "Le Jardin d'Epicure," "Troilus and Cressida," "Huckleberry Finn," "The Golden Ass," George Moore's "Avowals," Whibley's "A Book of Frankness," Dekker's "Gull's Hornbrook," Swift's essays, Hazlitt's "Table-Talk," Heine's prose work, Heine's poems, Dryden's poems, Remy de Gourmont's "Chemin de Velours" and "La Culture des Idées," "Human-All-Too-Human," "The Satyricon" of Petronius, Plutarch's "Lives" and Samuel Butler's translation of the "Odyssey."

My favorite poets are: Sappho, Anacreon, Catullus, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Herrick, Dryden, Donne, Patmore, Shelley, Beddoes, Browning, Thompson, Dowson, Yeats, Villon, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Corbière, Hugo, Heine, Goethe, T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Maxwell Bodenheim, Conrad Aiken, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elinor

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Wylie, Emily Dickinson, Adelaide Crapsey, Amory Hare, Carl Sandburg, James Stephens, Edwin Arlington Robinson and H. D.

I have never seen a formulated theory of æsthetics which I could not shoot full of holes in five minutes. The Croce-Spingarn theory I consider the most fallacious of them all. Consider the fundamental tenet of the theory as applied to criticism: "The poet's intention must be judged at the moment of the creative act, as mirrored in the work of art itself, and not by the vague ambitions which he imagines to be his real intentions before and after the creative act is achieved." If either Mr. Spingarn or Signor Croce will tell me what was "the intention at the moment of the creative act" of Shakespeare when he wrote that greatest of all poems, "The Phoenix and the Tortoise," I undertake to give readings from Signor Croce's huge tome on "Æsthetics" at the Coffee House Club and to sell a copy of "Creative Criticism" to Harry Lauder.

The men who interest me most among the younger group are: (as critics) Kenneth Burke, Edmund Wilson, Jr., Hansell Baugh and Ben Ray Redman; (as fictionists) Ben Hecht, Robert Nathan, John Dos Passos, Thomas Beer, Harvey Fergusson, Herbert Seligmann, Elliot H. Paul, Scott Fitzgerald, E. E. Cummings, Ruth Suckow, Lilith Benda, Thyra Winslow, Sara Haardt, Djuna Barnes, Eva Navone Provost, Donn Byrne; (as poets) T. S. Eliot, Maxwell Bodenheim, Wallace Stevens, Conrad Aiken, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Alfred Kreymborg, T. K. Hedrick, William Carlos Williams, Elinor Wylie and Marianne Moore. Among the older men (as critics) my chief interest is in: Carl Van Doren, John Macy, Ernest Boyd, H. L. Mencken, Stuart P. Sher-

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man, Wilson Follett, Philip Littell, Deems Taylor, George Jean Nathan and Willard Huntington Wright.

I think that John J. A. Murphy is the finest wood-cut artist living or dead. I think that Stanislaws Szukalski, who lives in New York, is Rodin's superior as a sculptor and that he is a much greater artist than either Bourdelle, Mestrovich, Epstein, Manship, Brancusi or any other contemporary whose work I have encountered. I believe that Szumanovski is the greatest musical apparition that has arisen since Wagner; that his "Second Symphony" is unqualifiedly of the first rank and that he has done something in music that no one else has done before him. I think that "The Love of Three Oranges," by Prokofieff, is heavy-footed poppycock. I think that Cabell's "Jurgen" is one of the indubitable masterpieces of literature. I think that "Paradise Lost" is not.

I think that *The Saturday Evening Post* is more authentically literary than *The Atlantic Monthly*. I think that Harry Leon Wilson's recent satire about the age-old war between youth and senility is amazingly good. I think there is no publication in England that has the artistic and literary importance of *The Dial*. This does not prevent me from thinking that a good two-thirds of *The Dial* is twaddle. I think that *The London Mercury* is the dullest and least intelligent publication with pretensions in the English language. I think that *The Little Review* and *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* for all their errors and puerilities have done more service to American letters than any other publications.

I think that Frank Moore Colby is one of the finest essayists living and that he has written things as good as anything to be found in "Le Jardin d'Epicure." The only stuff about the movies I can read is the anonymous

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critiques in the *Sunday Times*; the charming Miss Underhill, I admit, gauges her audience more accurately. I think that the best colyum conductor in America is Riq (Richard Atwater) on *The Chicago Evening Post*. The only newspaper reviewer I read with faithful consistency is N. P. D. of *The Globe*; I am radically opposed to almost every opinion she ever voiced, and I begin to think I am slipping when I find she has agreed with me about some book; but she has her say vigorously, directly, unequivocally and, I believe, honestly, and therefore I enjoy her. I think she is a serious menace to American letters; but she thinks the same about me, so there you are—fifty-fifty. Maybe we both are right. I think that Paul Rosenfeld is a rhapsodist, but not a critic. Still, I think it is a little less harrowing to read what art does to Paul Rosenfeld than to read what Heywood Broun does to art. Broun as a person I admire his side idolatry; but though he writes a lucid prose, I think, as a critic, he is nix. I think Percy Hammond and George Jean Nathan the only dramatic critics in America with any distinction of style. Robert Benchley's comment on the "Demi-Virgin": "A jury has decided that this play is not obscene, which is certainly a dirty crack at the author," is the best one line criticism I have read in years.

I think that Herriman, who draws "Krazy Kat," has genius of an exquisite and original sort; that he is a delicate and delicious fantasist, a James Stephens of the comic strip. I think that our cartoonists and comic strip artists are among the finest products of our indigenous culture and that Darling, Briggs, Frueh, Goldberg, Fox and McCutcheon are worth all the money they get and a great deal more in the way of critical appreciation.

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George Grosz, the German cartoonist, whose work has called forth extensive critical notice not only in his own country, but in France and Italy, is a confessed imitator of Rube Goldberg, and Poulbot, the French portrayer of children, is a disciple of Clare Briggs. American magazine illustrators since the time of Abbey have commanded the highest admiration in Europe, and I think that even now American illustrators lead the world, in testimony of which I submit the work of Henry Raleigh, Wallace Morgan, C. E. Chambers, Dean Cornwell, Walt Louderbeck, Harvey Dunn and William Fogarty.

I think that Miss Fanny Brice is the finest artist on the American stage. I think that Charlie Chaplin is perhaps the greatest serio-comic artist the world has ever known. I agree with Gilbert Seldes in that more intelligent and satisfactory entertainment is to be had in the average vaudeville house than in the average legitimate theater. I cannot sit through a movie unless it is a comedy, and I don't think Douglas Fairbanks is comical. I got no emotional thrill out of "The Hairy Ape," because the extraordinary mastery of technique Mr. O'Neill displayed in that play absorbed all my faculties. I got more æsthetic satisfaction out of "He Who Gets Slapped" than out of any other play last season; I don't know what Andryeff was trying to prove—if anything—more than I know what Shakespeare was trying to prove in "Hamlet," and I don't care.

I heartily admire only one novel by Joseph Conrad, "Lord Jim," and only one short story, "Youth." "The Nigger of the Narcissus" I like only so-so, the rest of the novels not at all. "Victory" bored me to death. I am reserving Dickens for my old age. I have read only "Pickwick Papers," "David Copperfield" and "A Tale of

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Two Cities." Of Thackeray I have read only "Vanity Fair." * Of Meredith only "The Egoist" and "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel." Of the Brontës, only "Wuthering Heights." Of Bulwer Lytton, nothing. Of Trollope nothing. Of George Eliot everything and liked nothing. Of Jane Austen everything and liked every line of it. Balzac I consider to be not only the greatest master of form in the novel, but almost the one Frenchman of universal genius; he was one of the most penetrating critics in a race of critics, witness his essays on such diverging geniuses as Molière and Stendhal; he was one of the soundest of philosophers, both natural and speculative; and he wrote more epigrams to a chapter than Oscar Wilde, James McNeil Whistler and Moncton Miles concocted all together. My favorite short stories are "Judas Iscariot and Some Others," by Nicholas Andryeff; "The Procurator of Judea," by Anatole France; "El Ombu," by W. H. Hudson; "The Ghost Ship," by Richard Middleton; "Youth," by Joseph Conrad; "Cleopatra's Slipper," by Gautier; Cabell's story of Villon, Maupassant's story of the duel and Sherwood Anderson's "Hands."

Only one book ever made me shudder, "Le Jardin des Supplices," by Octave Mirabeau. Only one book in recent years has made me weep, "The Brook Kerith," by George Moore. Only one book has made me angry, "On Contemporary Literature," by Stuart P. Sherman. Only one book has made me sick, the last piece of twaddle by Coningsby Dawson about the war. These books at different stages have altered my point of view: "The World As Will and Idea," by Schopenhauer; "The Genealogy of

* I forgot; I read his excellent burlesques of Fenimore Cooper, Sir Walter Scott, etc., and his translation of Beranger's "When I Was Twenty-one."

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Morals," by Nietzsche; "Emerson's Essays," Diogenes Laertius's "Lives of the Philosophers," Huxley's "Essays," Maspero's "Egypt," Gibbons's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Suetonius's "Lives of the Twelve Cæsars," the conversations of Goethe and Eckermann; "The Idiot," by Dostoievsky; Anatole France's "Garden of Epicurus," Remy de Gourmont's "La Culture des Idées" and Fr. Campbell's "The Jesuits."

That's all I can think of for the moment. Further revelations on request, accompanied by stamped and addressed envelope.



I-9-2-2

SWIFT AND THE ANGLO-SAXON SPIRIT

Thursday, April 20.

To-night I read Swift again; he is to me a constant source of delight, and he is certainly one of the great masters of English prose. By this I mean particularly that his is the finest prose expression of the Anglo-Saxon spirit, a vigorous and protestant spirit, as opposed to the Celtic and the Latin spirit, both of which are catholic. So, too, would I place Thomas Dekker and William Hazlitt in the front rank as finer exemplars of pure English prose style than, say Sir Thomas Browne, who is Latin; Addison, who is dog-Latin; Pater, who is decadent Latin, and Stevenson, who is all styles in one. The very clarity, simplicity and irony of Swift, Dekker and Hazlitt differ entirely from the clarity, simplicity and irony of Montaigne, Renan and Anatole France. The tone is different; I don't say that it is better, merely that it is different. Recalling Coburn Gilman's spirited recital of "A Night Among the Wits," I am minded to quote from Swift's essay "On Conversation": "The worst conversation I ever remember to have heard in my life was that at Will's coffee house, where the wits (as they were called) used formerly to assemble—that is to say, five or six men who had writ plays, or at least prologues, or had a share in a miscellany, came thither and entertained one another with their trifling composures in so important an air as if they had been the noblest efforts of human nature." . . . A caustic but remarkable man, Swift.



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BROOKLYN BRIDGE AND ITS BUILDER

Friday, April 28.

J. P. McEvoy, the Chicago writer of topical verse, came to lunch, after which I took him for the view to be had from Brooklyn Bridge. He responded properly to the sheer lineal grace of the Manhattan Bridge, a structural design in chaste, straight lines and delicate curves which are a sensuous delight, a venture in utility which I should number among the æsthetic splendors of the city. We made note of the engineer, Colonel Washington A. Roebling, who constructed the Brooklyn Bridge, and we wondered why it was that biographies are usually written of the wrong people, of gabby politicians and bad authors, third-rate generals and stupid monarchs. Here was a man of whom we knew only vaguely that he had designed this bridge against the skepticism of the world's scientists and engineers. It took both imagination and exact knowledge, vision and precise calculations to achieve this impressive and useful monument of the resources of the human brain. But what was Colonel Roebling like? What is that genius like who plans to span the Hudson with a bridge whose anchor towers will be taller than the Woolworth Building?



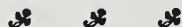
JAMES JOYCE AS FINANCIER

Thursday, May 11.

Ernest Boyd and others who know James Joyce describe his life in Dublin as being only a little more indigent than the average, and this largely on account of

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his own wild schemes for making millions and his actual lack of any economical or financial success.



BODENHEIM'S PERSONALITY

Thursday, May 18.

Maxwell Bodenheim came to see me this afternoon and rebuked me for frittering away so much time. He is the Rimbaud of our day in America, a remarkable and gifted poet about whose unique personality have grown incredible legends, none of which is more amazing than the facts concerning his life. He has been jailed for vagrancy; he once joined the Salvation Army and held street corner meetings to obtain food and shelter; he was supported for a long time by a professional thief, who had a queer early Christian theory about non-resistance and the rights of property, to which Bodenheim professed to be converted; he has starved and begged and worked at the most menial jobs. He suffers from delusions of persecution and has a mania for sympathy, and yet he is perhaps the most brilliant, alert-minded conversationalist I know. Also, he is one of the few utterly frank and honest men I have ever met. He has no deceit in him and he is constitutionally unable to make allowances for those necessary amenities of intercourse in others. For that reason he gets along with almost no one; he is disliked, avoided and even detested by people who are unable to dissociate his unsocial and ungracious personality from his brilliant and beautiful poetry. It has resulted, I think, in almost a general conspiracy of silence against him, a tacit avoidance which is only beginning to dis-

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rupt. I am confident that twenty years hence critics will begin to see that he has produced some of the most notable poetry of the period.



F. M. COLBY: A NEGLECTED ESSAYIST

Wednesday, May 24.

Lunched to-day with Frank Moore Colby*, the encyclopedist and essayist, who was full of enthusiasm for John Dewey's "Human Nature and Conduct," which he has just read. "It may be because I am ignorant of other recent literature on the subject," he said, "but this strikes me as a marvelous and important book. It upsets me completely. It's an irritating book. It knocked the pins out from under a lot of my little complaisances, vanities and egotism. I have seldom read a book which has moved me so much."

I asked him why he wrote so infrequently, and he said that it was because his life was split up, half a year up in the country getting out "The Statesman's Year Book" and working on the "International Encyclopedia" and the other half in town trying to get oriented so he could write again. "I was with 'The New Republic' crowd when they started out, but they got so intellectual I couldn't keep up with them. I fell panting by the wayside. They went to more trouble documenting an article than I would take to get into Heaven, and then I couldn't read the article. I say that with the highest respect,

* The essays of Mr. Colby, who died in 1926, are now available in two volumes entitled "The Colby Essays," published by Harper & Brothers and edited by Clarence Day, Jr., with a preface by Philip Littell.—C. H. G.

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for I admire their industry and erudition and zeal for truth. I admire any one who is capable of sustained and protracted effort. My own work is all a hopping about here and there. I should like to write a full length book on a single theme some time. I have one in mind, but it would take more leisure and money than I can afford, because the returns on it would be late and probably small." I told him I should like to see him write a history of American ideas or a narrative satire upon the contemporary American scene; but he said that would take more reading and labor than he could give to it.

Whatever he does in the future, Mr. Colby has written in "Constrained Attitudes," "Imaginary Obligations" and "The Margin of Hesitation," three volumes of essays which are to be a permanent source of rare delight in their mellow wisdom, suave irony, smiling humor and graceful English.



NEGLECTED AMERICAN WRITERS

Saturday, June 3.

Dropped off at Ted Paramore and Bunny Wilson's apartment this morning, and we fell into a discussion of the American literary men of high talent who had the misfortune to mature during an unæsthetic period and who have fallen into obscurity; such men as Henry Blake Fuller, Lafcadio Hearn, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Ambrose Bierce, Harold Frederick, Edgar Saltus and W. C. Morrow. We remarked that these men had a much keener sense of form than is exhibited by most of the more significant of our present-day writers. Crane

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certainly was a prose fiction artist of the highest type, a man who achieved perfection of form and style. None of us had read anything except "The Damnation of Theron Ware" by Frederick, none of us had read all the books of Crane, and I was the only one who was acquainted with the work of Fuller, Bierce, Saltus and Morrow. It is uncritical, I think, to credit Saltus with more than a certain Byzantine opulence of style, a glittering verbal encrustation; his philosophy is gaudy and sentimental; his stories the melodrama of the nineties. Bierce, too, is probably overrated by first edition collectors, although in several stories he achieved first-class work. The growing demand for accessible copies of the work of Hearn, that delicately sensitive prose artist who grew up in the miasmic atmosphere of Cincinnati and New Orleans, has resulted in the announcement of a collected edition. A half dozen men are at work at present on Crane's biography. The failure of Fuller is harder to explain. He is alive; he began as a disciple of Stendahl by writing "The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani," certainly a more readable book than "La Chartreuse de Parme," more carefully constructed, richer in overtones of suaver irony; he produced in "The Cliff Dwellers" and "With the Procession" two novels of Chicago life that are of exceptional merit and of his later novels, "On the Stairs" and "Bertram Cope's Year," it may be said that, whereas much fuss has been raised by the concision of May Sinclair's short novel, "The Life and Death of Harriett Fream," these two novels dispose of more difficult themes with greater economy and with more distinction of style.

It is curious to reflect how many of these men of that generation came to bad ends. Clyde Fitch and Stephen

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Crane died of the malnutrition they suffered in their youth; Bierce disappeared; Pollard's exit was hideous; Frederick's death was a scandal, and Morrow became a victim of drugs.

But, possibly, as a member of the old Chicago White-chapel Club once told me, "There were only two things left for an artist in America to do in those days—stay drunk or commit suicide."



THE CASE OF *The Smart Set*

Sunday, June, 4.

I told Ernest Boyd I wanted to take up the current custom of sneering at *The Smart Set*. That sort of thing has been overdone. *The Smart Set*, despite ignorant opinion to the contrary, is not a mere vehicle for Mencken and Nathan. It publishes as high an average of good fiction as any magazine in the United States or England, and this goes for *The Dial* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, as well as for the rest. *The Smart Set* published the only play Joseph Conrad ever wrote; it has published some of the best work of Katherine Mansfield, James Joyce, Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser, Arthur Schnitzler, August Strindberg, W. L. George, D'Annunzio, James Stephens, Maxim Gorky, James Huneker and dozens of others. The first and probably the best story that F. Scott Fitzgerald ever wrote, "Benediction," was published in *The Smart Set*; Harvey Fergusson's "The Blood of the Conquerors" ran in the magazine as a novelette; Lilith Benda's "The End of Ilsa Menteith," certainly one of the best short stories I ever read, appeared in *The Smart Set*, and the cur-

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rent June issue contains a short story by Thyra Samter Winslow which is wholly and typically American and yet is as good as any story by Guy de Maupassant I ever read. Willa Cather's "Coming, Aphrodite!" appeared originally in *The Smart Set*. Barry Benefield, Albert Payson Terhune, George Bronson-Howard, Ben Hecht, Willard H. Wright, Harry Leon Wilson, among others, got their first hearing in *The Smart Set*.



WILL CUPPY AT HOME

Saturday, July 8.

Went to High Hill Beach, on Long Island, to visit Will Cuppy, who lives alone in a shack there winter and summer, doing his own cooking, housework and laundry and writing a play which has already engaged him for ten years. His walls are lined with books, two-thirds of which are on psycho-analysis, neurology, psycho-pathology and love. There are Stendhal's "De l'Amour," Emil Luck's "Eros," Havelock Ellis's "Studies in the Psychology of Sex," all the translations of Freud, Jung, Forel and Krafft-Ebing, and monographs, pamphlets, treatises and books by Jelliffe, Frink, Trotter, Tridon, Tannenbaum and the rest. Books on "How to Keep Well," "Outwitting Our Nerves" and "Diet and Health" jostle Edward Carpenter's "Love's Coming of Age," Santayana's "Life of Reason" and Dewey and Tuft's "Ethics." Cuppy is the picture of health and yet he imagines he is prey of all known diseases. With a sweep of his arm in the direction of this vast collection of treatises on pathology he said: "I have every symptom men-

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tioned in those books. I experience the sweet emotion of recognition. Do not be disturbed to-night if you hear me reciting Coué's rosary. In his book on 'Auto-suggestion' Coué instructs the ailing to tie twenty knots in a string and to touch them separately, as a ritual, saying, 'I am getting better.' I think that as soon as I am well I shall begin telling my knots that I am leading a noble and upright life. That would be something of a novelty. In common with the rest of my generation I have thought that the right way to live was to do everything the copybooks say is bad, ignoble and sinful. I am beginning to doubt that as the perfect rule of life. I don't think it would hurt us any to have some of what ordinary people call 'decent instincts'—not that ordinary people often have them."

He warmed up a delicious plate of cham chowder, fried some eels and made some salad. I was ravenously hungry from the trip and the sea air. After we had cleaned the dishes we went for a swim in the surf. I had imagined from what Cuppy had told me that he led a hermit life, coming to New York about once in two weeks; but he is more gregarious than I am. Everybody on the beach knows him and likes him; he talks with children and old men and women on grounds of common understanding, and after supper to-night he trotted up to the Casino while I stayed home and read.

Sunday, July 9.

Cuppy has a battered old piano, a relic of pre-prohibition days, given him by a former owner of a road-house, and this morning he played Brahms, Beethoven, Rimsky-Korsakov and Grieg for three hours, rather mar-

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velously, considering that three of the keys make no sound at all and the others stick and jiggle at the touch.



ON DIME NOVELS

Monday, July 10.

Went to sleep thinking about the Beadle Collection of Dime Novels, which Edmund Lester Pearson wrote me to-day would be placed on exhibition at the public library this week. The Beadle collection comprises 1,483 separate publications of the publishing house of Beadle & Adams, founded in 1859 by Erastus Beadle, a printer in Pierstown, Otsego County, New York. The library bulletin says truly: "The Collection is literally saturated with the pioneer spirit of America. It portrays the struggles, exploits, trials, dangerous feats, hardships and daily lives of the American pioneers from the days of the Puritans to the death of Custer, and breathes the spirit which for two and a half centuries shaped the conquest and development of the continent north of the Rio Grande. It is a literature intensely nationalistic in character, obviously designed to stimulate adventure, self-reliance and achievement; to exalt the feats of the pioneer men and women who settled the country, and to recite the conditions under which those early figures lived and did their work." . . . I often wonder why my father forbade me to read those stories, a restriction which only intensified my curiosity about them and caused me to read every one I could lay my hands on, for they were so much better reading than the Henty and Optic books, and they were about a freer and more adventurous life

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than the Horatio Alger, Jr., books which were about nothing except poor boys getting rich. My father, I think, had accepted the then current idea, without investigation, that dime novels and cigarettes were immoral. But it is a pleasure to recall "Boone the Hunter," "Kit Carson," "Famous Frontiersmen, Pioneers and Scouts," "Texas Jack" and "Buffalo Bill," and how they fired the imagination to ride horseback and go camping in the woods, build tents and lean-tos, make camp fires and cook and play "Wild West."



A PSYCHOGRAPH OF MENCKEN

Thursday, July 13.

In a small brochure about Mencken published some years ago, to which I contributed the opening essay, there is published a drawing of the subconscious Mencken that makes all that has been written about Mencken superfluous. It is at once a criticism and an interpretation; it reveals all and explains all. It accounts for his limitations and his best points. It is a portrait of a beetle-browed, wrathful-countenanced, challenging-eyed German pedant, his white hair brushed vigorously back from a bald, high forehead in the manner of Henrik Ibsen. It is the face of a man who wants things done well, whether it be a dinner, a concerto, a lesson in Greek syntax or a day's plowing. It is the face, too, of a man with tough opinions and prejudices, a flaming passion for truth and honesty (as he sees it), impatient with mediocrity and stupidity, utterly lacking in petty flattery or malice, insatiably athirst for exact knowledge (even if he later makes

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inexact generalisations from it), a naturalist in his philosophy, looking upon mysticism, philosophic idealism, psychic matters, utopias here or hereafter, the perfectibility of the human race and most poetry as either balmy or nonsensical. It is the portrait of a good man and an earnest and rather humorous one; a man of honor, fine scruples and a heavy touch of sentiment; a man who loves babies and loses respect for most of them when they grow up; a man, indeed, whose bark is worse than his bite and who annoys and exasperates only petty-minded, humorless, warped and tedious people. He is magnificent in a verbal rage. His words swash and buckle and dispatch whole troops of rich Jews, sovietists, radicals, liberals, politicians, professors, spiritualists, critics, Presbyterians, poets, rotarians and vice crusaders. This phantom crew of varlets disposed of to the war-shouts, "Idiots," "Imbeciles," "Boobs" and "Blather-skites," he subsides, wets his whistle and puts in a good word for Dreiser, Cabell, Anderson, Hergesheimer, Sandburg, Hecht, Willa Sibert Cather, Thomas Beer, Thyra Samter Winslow, Ruth Suckow, Harvey Fergusson, Steve Benet and dozens of youngsters who are just beginning.



THE EFFECT OF "ULYSSES"

Friday, July 14.

Djuna Barnes and Edmund Wilson, Jr., came to dinner to-night and we went to the "Chauve-Souris," which, on second encounter, rather bored me, except for the music. The price they demand for seats, I think, is outrageous; the genuine artistic merit of the show is below that of a

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good average vaudeville bill and it seems to me mere snobbery to pretend that it isn't. Djuna tells me that the publication of "Ulysses" has driven her to literary suicide. "I shall never write another line," she said, with a graceful gesture of despair. "Who has the nerve to after that? And poor Joyce, what is he getting out of it, poor devil? Living in wretchedness and poverty, half blind and tormented day and night by migraine." If I am to believe them "Ulysses" has proved to be a contemporary "Werther" to numerous writing young persons; they all speak of ending their scribbling careers in despair over the perfection of "Ulysses." But they will get over it. I hope so. Djuna, for instance, has an unusual talent, a curious way of looking at things, a gift of imagery, an unschooled and undisciplined, precious facility of expression. Djuna said that Joyce is frightfully superstitious. Just before "Ulysses" came out she was walking with him and his wife in the Bois de Bologne, when a man brushed by and mumbled something she did not understand. Joyce blanched and trembled. Djuna asked what was the matter. "That man, whom I have never seen before," he said, "said to me as he passed, in Latin, 'You are an abominable writer!' That is a dreadful omen the day before the publication of my novel."

(Miss Barnes did not commit literary suicide. She subsequently published "A Book" and "Ryder," the latter of which particularly illustrates her "precious facility of expression."—C. H. G.)



HARDY'S POETRY

Friday, July 21.

To-night I read Thomas Hardy's new volume of poems, "Late Lyrics and Earlier," and I marveled at the pure,

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bitter-sweet strains of lyric loveliness this great man is capable of, so many decades past the glow of youth. This volume adds strength to the contention current in critical quarters that Hardy is even greater as a poet than as a novelist. Hardy certainly thinks he is; he has always regarded his prose fiction as so much fuel to keep the pot boiling; he cared so little about his novels that he allowed publishers to make emendations and deletions, and even rewrote the end of "Jude the Obscure" to suit his publisher's notion of the popular taste. His novels remain great, of course, despite his primary interest in poetry. His personal expression, though, is to be found more readily in his poetry than in his prose: The Introduction, an apologia, to this, his last volume, is opaque and involved and difficult to read and it shows the effect of age, which his verse does not. These lyrics have a rich and beautiful quality. In many of them he has set for himself and overcome some amazing technical difficulties, but so deft, ingenious, concise and musical is he that he gives an effort of spontaneity to his most complex verse forms.



THE MONKEYSHINES OF EDMUND WILSON

Tuesday, July 25.

About nine o'clock to-night a taxi drove up and there came trooping up the stairs Mary Blair, dressed in pajamas, house slippers and raincoat; Tallulah Bankhead in bathing suit and cutaway coat; and Edmund Wilson, Jr., in a brown dressing gown and a top hat. They gave us forthwith a superb vaudeville performance. Tallulah

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imitated Gilda Gray, Emily Stevens, Sarah Bernhardt and Chic Sale. Mary recited "The Little Tin Soldier Is Covered With Dust" and gave a capital imitation of Michio Ito, and Bunny performed some feats of legerdemain and conjuring. It was all refreshing and amusing and I pondered the happy circumstances which allows so serious and studious a young man as Bunny to forget himself in a riot of giddy nonsense and absurdity. True enough, he did spoil it to a slight extent by becoming grave later on and reciting Anatole France's forlorn and pessimistic comment on the life of Racine; a lugubrious observation about the wrongness of things. I should have preferred, for the sake of the evening's impromptu perfection, that he and Tallulah did not repeat that they must seem very silly and that it was awfully decent of us to put up with it. Nothing could well have afforded us a more joyous evening.



BODENHEIM'S POETIC THEORY

Wednesday, July 26.

Maxwell Bodenheim dropped in and complained against the general critical fallacy of writing of poetry in terms of music. "Poetry," he said, "is a separate art or it is nothing, and, to speak of its music as the one thing by which it stands or falls, is as bad as to speak of the philosophy of the Fifth Symphony as the one thing by which it stands or falls. Even to approach the varied harmonies and tones possible in music, by the use of words, is impossible. I can get more actual music out of the piano with one finger than the most musical poet

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in the world can get out of the arrangement of words."

Bodenheim was, as usual, in a rage against editors, poets and critics. He clicked and sucked his teeth, stutted and beat time with his foot, and disposed of at least twenty people by name with poisonous epithets. The least malicious of these was his reference to Edmund Wilson, Jr., as "an erudite policeman, fatuously twirling his critical nightstick; he ought to take the examination for Mayor Hylan's finest."



CABELL AND WOMEN

Thursday, August 3.

Yesterday's work prevented me from recording that Frances Newman, of *The Atlanta Constitution*, came to see me and told me that I may be right about James Branch Cabell's being shy and reticent in the presence of men, but that with a woman he is quite ready to open up his heart and speak freely. "He is, however, a very shockable man," she said. "I caused him to blush furiously by a most innocent little sally."



JOYCE AND HIS CREDITORS

Tuesday, August 8.

Grant Overton, Mrs. Overton, Mary and Padraic Colum and Maxwell Bodenheim came out to the house to-night. The Colums are sailing to-morrow for Ireland to be gone until November. Mrs. Colum has the most beautiful red hair I have ever seen and an intelligence as

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sharp as a butcher's knife. Padraic reminds me always of a Leprechaun, so tiny, sprite-like and lovable is he. The Colums told us more about James Joyce and "Ulysses." It seems that Joyce came from an excellent, once wealthy, family which sank down to the direst poverty and that Joyce has always been at once proud of his parentage and resentful of its fate. "I am the only one he speaks well of in 'Ulysses,'" said Padraic, "and the reason is that I am the only one he never borrowed any money from. He has pilloried with the most vicious and the cleverest satire every one he was ever under obligation to. He once said to Dr. Gogarty just after he borrowed some money from him: 'A shame it is that a genius like me should have to borrow money from the likes of you.' When he went to Italy he scraped up as much money as he could by soliciting Lady Gregory and nearly everybody of importance in Dublin, and the very night he landed in Paris he had printed at his own expense a scandalous and terrible satire upon each and every one who had given him money and sent the leaflets over to be distributed in Dublin." Bodenheim said he understood and honored Joyce's action. "That was," he said, "Joyce's way of satisfying his revenge for the humiliation of having to accept their money." There is, Mrs. Colum told us, in "Ulysses" every resident of Dublin one would have been likely to encounter ten years ago in an afternoon's walk in Dublin. A critic, she said, had told her that he had taken a certain figure in the book to be a symbol of something, whereas it is an exact portrayal of a very notorious, quaint man everybody knows without knowing much about him. There are satirical allusions in the book, Padraic told us, that no one outside of Dublin would recognize. He pointed

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out how Joyce had satirized the attempt to Gaelicize Dublin during the Gaelic revival, when a lot of people pretended to a knowledge of Gaelic they didn't have. Joyce sprinkles through one of Bloom's speeches the one word they recognized and applauded—a word indicating the end of a sentence.



ON FIRST READING JANE AUSTEN

Friday, August 25.

When a copy of Robert Browning's selected poems and plays in the "Modern Student's Library," published by Charles Scribner's Sons, came in to-day, I was reminded of the event that decided me, two years ago, to be cautious of devastating critical epigrams. If the epigram is clever it sticks in the reader's mind, no matter how unfair or unwarranted it is, and consciously or unconsciously influences one's opinion. Until two years ago I had never read Jane Austen. Mark Twain's pronouncement—"A very good library could be started by leaving out Jane Austen"—had been stenciled in my memory and I had in consequence avoided the works of Jane Austen with a particular distaste. Then there fell into my hands a copy of "Pride and Prejudice," with an introduction by William Dean Howells, in the "Modern Student's Library" series. Ever since I read Mr. Howells's little book on criticism—one of the most intelligent discourses on the subject I know of—I had been interested in whatever Mr. Howells had to say about books. From the introduction I turned to the novel itself and I felt like shouting with the exultation of a discoverer after ten

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pages. Here was, if not so vigorous a satirist, a much subtler one than Mark Twain himself, whom Mark had maligned in an epigram; here was a genius at characterization who could with one little word tell more about a person than most novelists, even great novelists like Balzac, could tell in twenty pages; here was, in fine, one of the most delightful artists in English prose fiction, from an enjoyment of whom I had been kept by a witty misrepresentation.



THE QUALITY OF W. H. HUDSON

Thursday, August 31.

They told me in the local room last night that W. H. Hudson was dead; that he had died in England on August 18, but that the news had just been made public. The obituaries and the editorials his death evoked will give a new impetus, I hope, to the curiosity concerning Hudson's writings and lead new readers to one of the finest literary artists of our time. To Hudson fame came pathetically late. But, true artist that he was, he wrote out of an inner necessity and bothered not whether his audience was large or small. A few steadfast admirers—John Galsworthy, Cunninghame-Graham, Joseph Conrad among them—lent the prestige of their names in enthusiastic and appreciative encomnia on Hudson's work; sporadically some courageous publisher would venture his money on Hudson's books against the stakes of public favor, a few reviewers here and there would shout his name loudly but futilely to roaring winds of public interest, and the book would die, the corpse stretched out in awful lengths

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on the shelves of the publisher's warehouse, a chilling reminder that a publisher who would eat had better not indulge too recklessly his personal tastes in literature. Then came a new edition of "Green Mansions" at an opportune moment; it received good notices; the public bought and liked it. Older books were unearthed and brought out in new and attractive formats; Hudson was urged to piece together his notebooks as a naturalist; appreciation came just not too late—to the man who wrote one of the finest short stories in the English language in "El Ombu" (from "Tales of the Pampas"), a fine Utopian fancy, edged with satire, in the "Crystal Age," and unearthly beautiful idyl in "Green Mansions" and superb descriptions in "The Purple Land." Hudson's style was a flexible vehicle, adapted always to the material at hand, changing in cadence and tempo in accordance with the subject. Thus he escaped a monotony of manner and the danger of mannerisms to which Pater, James and Meredith, for instance, were frequent victims.

Thursday, September 7.

At lunch to-day with Alfred Knopf, who told me of his visit last year with W. H. Hudson, who recently died in England. "He was a gentle and courteous old man," said Alfred, "who was somewhat bewildered by the fame and financial security that had come to him in his old age along with the belated recognition of his books. He, who had been so poor, had so much money then he didn't know what to do with it."



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WHY DO DRAMATIC CRITICS DEFEND THEMSELVES?

Saturday, September 9.

Why is it, I wonder, that of all forms of expression, that of dramatic criticism calls for the most persistent, constant and elaborate defense on the part of its practitioners? Why are dramatic critics always apologizing for themselves? No dramatist, except Shaw (who may have formed the habit as a dramatic critic), feels called upon to defend his plays before he lets you read them; musical composers rarely make explanations and excuses for what they have written (even program notes are usually written by some one else); sculptors and painters do not argue out their theories to you before they set before you what their hands and imaginations have accomplished; even literary critics usually write only a short preface outlining their salient aims and let it go at that. But out of the fifty-one short essays in A. B. Walkley's "Pastiche and Prejudice," all but fifteen, as I recall, are a defense of his theories of criticism, and of these fifteen eleven have nothing to do with the drama. George Jean Nathan's "The Critic and the Drama" is a 152-page continuation of an apologia which began with his first book and which has occupied two-thirds of each succeeding volume from his pen; and of which we have addenda in the current *Smart Set*. James Agate's "Alarums and Excursions" begins early with an essay on "The Decay of Criticism" and obliquely proves its point throughout the book. Pick up any book of dramatic criticism, thumb through the table of contents and observe how many chapters are given over to the theory of dramatic criticism, how much more criticism of dramatic criticism there is than of dramatic criticism.

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The interesting thing about this phenomenon, mind you, is precisely that the critic's apologies and self-defense are the most interesting things about his writings. Mr. Walkley on Duse, Bernhardt or Sir Arthur Wing Pinero is almost intolerable; Mr. Walkley on his own craft is a delight. Shaw's book of dramatic criticism remains to me the high point of his achievement, and largely because there is little dramatic criticism in it.



ELINOR WYLIE

Saturday, September 23.

Elinor Wylie, author of "Nets to Catch the Wind," my wife, Seward Collins and I motored out to New Canaan and had dinner with Seward's mother. Elinor is, I think, one of the three or four leading women poets in English. She told me that the poems in her first volume were written over a space of only a few months, two years ago; that she wrote seldom, but very easily and with few revisions, having recently written six poems in a single night.



TRAGIC EPISODES OF LITERARY HISTORY

Tuesday, September 26.

To lunch to-day with Earle Balch and Charles H. Denhard, and we fell into a discussion of tragic episodes in literary history. All of us remembered especially the account of Longfellow's funeral in W. D. Howells's "My

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Literary Friends and Acquaintance." Emerson was afflicted with that aphasia which clouded the closing years of his life. He looked for a long time at the face of the dead poet and said slowly and painfully: "The man we have just been burying, gentlemen, was a great and beautiful soul—but I forget his name."

Other incidents that made a profound impression upon me are: Nietzsche's scribbling a note to Georg Brandes just before they hustled the great enemy of Christianity off to the asylum and signing it "The Crucified"; Charles and Mary Lamb walking hand in hand across a field and weeping; Julian, called the Apostate, standing on the balcony waiting for the bacchanal he had thought would signalize the return of the purity, beauty and grace of pagan Greece, and turning away heartbroken when he discovered that the only ones who joined in it were the thieves, drunkards, prostitutes and sustainers who had turned his dream into an obscene orgy; Swift's enigmatic words, his face aflush, after an interview with Stella: "You see before you the most unhappy wretch alive"; and Verlaine composing a pitiable defense of himself as a sober, respectable, right-thinking citizen in an effort to meet the silly requirements for election to the French Academy.

Curiously enough, the irony of four of these episodes turns upon insanity; but there is to me no greater tragedy than the crumbling of a mind which has wrecked itself in thought.



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ERNEST BOYD AS 'ARTIST'S MODEL

Wednesday, September 27.

A few years ago Ernest Boyd posed for the picture of the Saviour in Dublin Cathedral, which eminent ecclesiasts declare to be the finest one in existence.



A CHARACTER OF ACHMED ABDULLAH

Tuesday, October 3.

Lunched to-day with Achmed Abdullah. He is an interesting person, a man of action turned litterateur. He is heavy set, bull-necked, with a high-bridged spatulate nose, thin lips, sparse, crinkly hair, brownish complexion and the voice and manner of a cavalry captain, which, by the way, he once was. His full name is Captain Syyed Shaykh Achmed Abdullah Nadir Khan el-Iddris-syieh el-Durani. He was born in Kabul, Afghanistan. He studied at Oxford and at the University of Paris and took his degree in Koranic law at al-Azar in Cairo, Egypt. Leo Ditrichstein tells me that Abdullah speaks pure Berlineese and Abdullah tells me that he also speaks Manchu and Persian and that he can find his way about like a native in Tibet, Moscow, Shanghai, Constantinople and Baluchistan. He was a captain in the British-Indian army and he fought with the Turkish troops in the first Balkan war. He wears the emblem of the Order of Osmanie and a decoration for bravery. He has roved, it appears, all over the face of the Orient. How he ever settled into the sedentary work of writing fiction I have not ascertained. Possibly he began writing in an extremity of un-

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employment as the handiest way of turning an honest penny. I remember his telling me that when he was on his uppers a few years ago he wrote epigrams by the yard for the *Smart Set* at twenty-five cents apiece. Now he has a half dozen books to his credit, he has figured in almost every collection of distinguished contemporary American short stories and his latest volume, "Alien Souls," contains some glamorous stories of sound workmanship and literary distinction.

His apartment in Waverly Place is like a setting by Lee Simonson for a dramatic version of "The Virgin of Stamboul." The walls are hung and the floor is strewn with Turkish, Persian, Chinese and Afghan rugs, rich and beautiful in sheen, pattern and texture. One admires a scimitar, with a traced silver handle, on one side of which the design is worked in copper, and Abdullah explains that it was his grandfather's weapon and that silver wears by friction, hence the copper. One is pleased by a portrait of a square-bearded old fellow of distinguished mien and a well-fed, important aspect, and one learns that this, too, is an ancestor and, moreover, that it was painted in defiance of the Mahometan law, which decrees that no living creatures may be represented in art. "Hence," says Abdullah, "the conventionality of Turkish art, Turkish architecture, Turkish rug weaving. It is an art of geometrical designs." There is a divan piled high with cushions, a bronze Siva of the fourteenth century, a landscape in Persian embroidery, a Brahma with more arms than a caterpillar, which Abdullah admits is messy because of the Hindu influence; a Samurai sword of tempered steel, with a carved ivory handle; a Moslem prayer rug, with a design suggesting the entrance to a mosque; a hundred bits of decorative interest

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in pistols, swords, knives, inkstands, incense burners and so on. . . .

Clad in tweeds and oxfords, Abdullah moves about in this setting, gesticulating. Many things annoy him. His head is stuffed with the most absurd notions. He solemnly believes that the Messrs. Percy Hammond, Alexander Woollcott, Heywood Broun, Burns Mantle, Stark Young, Stephen Rathbun and Kenneth Macgowan foregather several days in advance of the production of each play and decide whether they shall boost or roast it. He is irreparably convinced that every factor except an honest opinion may enter into this decision. If Mr. Woollcott is able to contend successfully that the issue of his current romance depends upon the proper critical reception of a play, or if Mr. Broun is able to contend successfully that the status of the mortgage on his Connecticut estate will be affected by the play's endurance, or if Mr. Hammond announces that a check will be forthcoming large enough to split seven ways, they will all, according to Abdullah, search the dictionary for synonyms for "good." If, on the other hand, there are no material or personal reasons why they should indorse a play, it is Abdullah's firm conviction that they will agree to pan it. My insistence that these gentlemen hate each other cordially and that they would come to no agreement on anything, out of sheer distaste for each other's judgment, left Abdullah unconvinced. The critics of literature, in his opinion, are just as bad, if not worse. Two-thirds of them, he thinks, are upstarts out of Princeton and Yale who are ready to declare that a native of Singapore does not give the right atmosphere of Singapore in his fiction, or that Chekhov doesn't know Russian life. Kenelm Digby and Dr. Clifford Smythe, it is Ab-

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dullah's firm belief, meet every Tuesday at lunch and compare notes on what they shall knock or boost the forthcoming week. He did not say it, but I have no doubt that he suspects that I am in the pay of Mr. George Putnam, the Messrs. Little, Brown & Co. and Mr. Appleton, and that for my animadversions on "This Freedom" I was paid handsomely for the discussion my unfavorable critique occasioned.

In short, Captain Abdullah is a delightful luncheon companion. He hates the Jews, but his two best friends are Mr. David Belasco and Mr. Morris Gest. They are, he says, artists. Literary Jews he has no use for, and what he said about the Messrs. Hecht, Frank, Seldes, Rosenfeld and Bodenheim I cannot report. He is, however, an ardent admirer of Anatole France, André Suarès and Maurice Barres, and when I suggested that these eminent Frenchmen had Semitic blood he made magnificent gestures, as if to say that in these cases it didn't count.

For the Christian ethic he entertains as violent a distaste as for the Hebraic racial characteristics. He is, he says, a Mahometan, and he will leave any table where pork is served. "Your Christian law imposes impossible edicts," he exclaimed; "it commands you to love your enemies. I hate my enemies." And I can well believe him.

His highest admiration is reserved for the New Englanders of Anglo-Saxon Puritan stock—the Lowells and the Lodges, the Cabots and the Higginsons. The aliens among us, he says, insult them because "they will not become Hebraic-Germanic, or Judeo-Slavic, or Spanish, Italian, Czecho-Slovakian, Ruthenian or what not. Why should they? I am glad to conform to the ethics and customs of this country, for the privilege of living here is an inestimable one."

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He reserves, however, the privilege of holding our play and book critics in low esteem. I could not seriously take issue with him, for I was witness to his buying a floral tribute to an actress he admired and he told me that he made twenty drafts of every story he wrote. He is an interesting, amusing and delightful, if credulous, chap.



THE CASE OF GERTRUDE STEIN

Saturday, October 14.

The "Literary Review" of the *New York Evening Post* has an editorial to-day which says: "Who is to maintain standards when judges run amuck, when an author of repute can go on record to the effect that he first discovered the full beauty of language through the work of Gertrude Stein and a critic and editor of standing can soberly reprint this comment? What profit it literature if a man strive himself for stark sincerity in writing and then commend buffoonery?" . . . The author of repute is Sherwood Anderson and the critic and editor of repute is myself. The occasion for the comment was a conversation reported in the "Bookman's Daybook." Under other circumstances I should maintain, as I have hitherto maintained, that in reporting conversations in this place I am not advancing my own opinions or even announcing an agreement with the opinions I quote, but merely reflecting what is being thought and said by those I encounter. But here I must request suspended judgment. When the commentator says that when Mr. Anderson states that he first discovered the full beauty of language through the work of Gertrude

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Stein, he is "commending buffoonery," I am forced to say: "This is not just! It may appear to the 'Literary Review' commentator that Miss Stein is a buffoon, but to me (after Mr. Anderson's report) and to Mr. Anderson she is not. Miss Stein has written reams of stories, so many that they line her walls in neatly arranged, ticketed typescript. She has the means wherewith to publish these experiments in expression, but she chooses not to do so because of that very easiness by which she has been labeled a buffoon by paragraphers and editorial writers. Knowledge has come to her that her experiments are of use rather to writers than to the general public, that in dissociating words and making new patterns of verbal suggestion and imagery she cannot hope to evoke more than ridicule from the public and from the critics who are hostile to new forms. And so she continues in her earnest, honest and visionary way to labor in secret for what may be, as Mr. Anderson sees it (and I) a new epoch in literary expression.

"I admit, frankly, that in Miss Stein's published work I can establish only the most fleeting associations, that much of it means nothing whatever to me, but whenever I have been able to extract an emotional or intellectual experience from her word patterns that experience has been unique. To Mr. Anderson they have been a revelation and an inspiration; therein is their justification."



CABELL'S INFLUENCE

Wednesday, October 18.

In his third book of "Prejudices" H. L. Mencken says that whereas Joyce, Dreiser, Anderson, Wells, Bennett

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and others have hundreds of imitators, Cabell, by the very polished dexterity and beautiful inevitability of his personal manner, has no imitators at all; that they are all scared off by the work involved in approaching his skill at writing. This is far from the truth. The very seduction of Cabell's prose style has entranced and caused the following authors to imitate him: F. Scott Fitzgerald, Wilson Follett, Joseph Hergesheimer, Ben Ray Redman, John Peale Bishop, Thomas Caldecott Chubb, Robert Nathan, Hunter Stagg, Guy Holt, Thomas Beer, Hansell Baugh, Louis Untermeyer, Vincent Starrett and half of the youngsters whose work is just beginning to sprout all over the country.

Seward Collins pointed out that the very dedication of "Cytherea" is no more than a paraphrase of the dedication Cabell inscribed to the monograph he wrote on Hergesheimer and that "The Bright Shawl," as did "Cytherea," showed a very obvious Cabellian influence.



LAUGHING IN THE ALGONQUIN

Friday, October 20.

Lunched with Thomas Caldecott Chubb at Frank Case's salon * and we were joined at table by Tallulah Bankhead. Tallulah got to laughing so loud at her own jokes (they were good, if embarrassing) that, as if by tacit consent, the whole room shushed us. Later on Heywood Broun admitted his guilt and said that he had led the shushing because it didn't seem to him "that anything Burton Rascoe could say would be funny enough to cause such

* The Algonquin Hotel.

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laughter." The truth of it was that Tallulah (the clever and pretty little minx) was repeating the lines of "The Torchbearers" in a manner immeasurably funnier than they are uttered on the stage and she was enjoying the show in memory as much as we were enjoying it by her reminding us of it. . . .



GERTRUDE ATHERTON

My wife and I went to dinner to-night at William and Mary Roberts's and found there Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, Hildegard Hawthorne and her Indian husband, and Rollin Lynde Hartt. Mrs. Atherton told us how, as a little girl, she had been taken to see Walt Whitman. She had heard that the great poet always kissed girls and women who were brought to him, and as she was led into the room, she said, she "couldn't see a clean spot among all those whiskers." Whitman's funeral, she said, had to be postponed because everybody present got drunk. "There wasn't a sober person in all Philadelphia," she said, "except Agnes Repplier."

Mrs. Atherton is a serene, self-assured, witty and amusing woman, without pose or affectations, a bit opinionated perhaps, but with interesting opinions which do not assume the dead weight of convictions. I was reminded as I listened to her that the first knowledge I had of her existence came through great newspaper spreads and headlines and photographic layouts, occasioned innocently enough (as it seems now) by her having the temerity to smoke a cigarette at the South Shore Country Club in Chicago. It was a great scandal at the time and Mrs. Atherton, who defended her action with a vigorous and

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reasoned argument, was considered by all the George and Myra Babbitts to be an abandoned woman.



FAMILIAR NAMES OF AUTHORS

Wednesday, October 29.

Mrs. James Branch Cabell is up from Richmond to see her children who are in school here. She was in mourning for the loss of a daughter, and I did not recognize her in the hotel lobby until Guy Holt called me over. Like most Southern women, she refers always to her husband as Mr. Cabell, never calling him James, Jim or Jimmy; indeed I don't think any one in the world would ever think of calling him Jimmy and nobody in the world except Sinclair ("Red") Lewis would ever think of calling him Jim, and nobody in the world except Joseph ("Joe") Hergesheimer would ever think of calling him James. And I'll bet they don't call him either one of those names to his face. Maybe "Red" would; he's such a sociable sort that it would be just like him to address the Archbishop of Canterbury as Archie and Anatole France as Nat and get away with it. Joe, in one of his expansive moods, might look at Cabell with a confidential air and say: "Remember now, James, there are only a few of us," and, talking about Cabell to Carl Van Vechten and Ernest Boyd, he might go so far as to refer to him as Jim. But, somehow, there is something about the man—not an austerity or a forbidding exterior; for he hasn't those; on the contrary he is amiable, full of jests and smiling ironies, rather humble and shy and unaggressive—but he has a capacity for self-isolation in

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the midst of a crowd or in conversation with only one person, a certain reserve and inner dignity 'which tells you at once that he doesn't wear his notions or his emotions on his sleeve. You simply call him Cabell, if you are friendly with or closely acquainted with him, and Mr. Cabell if you are not, and if you are Mrs. Cabell, you call him Mr. Cabell all the time. He returns the compliment of nomenclature and all is well. I don't know but that I like it, probably for the reason that I never had a nickname myself that stuck. I have been called "Rass" and "Burt" and "Bourbon" and once recently even "Birdie," but usually only by one person and for a very short time; they always come back to Burton or to Rascoe, and I confess I am more comfortable when they do. It's probably because the two names are not easy to shorten and have no traditional variants like Hal or Harry for Henry. Take H. L. Mencken: Joe Hergesheimer calls him Harry, George Jean Nathan calls him Menck, T. R. Smith calls him Henry and his pastor and I call him Heinie and each name seems to fit him equally well. . . . And there's Dr. Henry Seidel Canby. You might call him Canby, but you would never call him Seidel or Sidey nor very likely Henry—he's somehow either Canby or Dr. Canby and mostly the latter. . . . Carl Van Vechten is readily enough Carl or Carlo, but under no circumstances Van or Vech; and Ernest Boyd is simply Ernest Boyd or Mr. Boyd or Boyd and not, no, not never, Ernie.



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AMIEL ON ROUSSEAU

Thursday, December 7.

Once home and in bed, I read Henri-Frederic Amiel's "Jean Jacques Rousseau," which has just been translated by Van Wyck Brooks and published by B. W. Huebsch. This is, I think, the fairest, most judicial piece of critical writing I ever read. It is without *parti-pris* or prejudice; it attempts to get at Rousseau from every possible angle, to point out his every weakness and every virtue, to see his personality in the round and to account for him and his influence dispassionately and objectively. There is nothing either cynical or sentimental, clever or sententious, superficial or prophetic about Amiel's treatment; he does not set out to ridicule, like Lytton Strachey, or to moralize, like Paul Elmer More: he presents a full-length portrait of an extraordinary man, with great economy of detail. It is indeed, almost inhuman, this critique, so lacking is it in a personal point of view.



AUTHORS AND STYLES

Friday, December 14.

Ten out of a published list of twenty contributors to *Vanity Fair* have written unsigned skits under the general title, "The Most Disgraceful Thing I Ever Did." Readers of the magazine are invited to compete in determining the authorship of the sketches. In announcing the contest the magazine says it believes that "style is the man" and that "any intelligent reader, if he has a general acquaintance with the average work of a certain writer,

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should be able, by means of his style, to identify any given article by him."

I agree with this statment, except that I should refine the definition of *style*, in this connection, to the point where it means the precise use of a single word in a definite context. It is my belief that the whole quality of a writer's mind may at times be distinguished or identified by one word. I hold that in any given piece of writing an author is almost certain to use one word in a context, which use is idiosyncratic with him and alien to the thought, character and expression of any one else.

That is why parody is one of the most difficult and the most frequently unsuccessful forms of composition. Almost never is parody a reflection of the spirit of the man whose work is parodied, simply because that spirit is an elusive quality shifting behind the mannerisms of the man. It is the mannerism—the body without the spirit—which most parodists catch and try to render. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any parodist, including those parodists who parody themselves, ever caught that elusive quality. Just a minute now! I hear you interrupting, that is a naïve paradox—this saying that a person cannot catch his own spirit in self-parody! But an author is just as likely to be misled by the superficial aspects of his self-expression as any one else. We know how unreliable, as a rule, authors are in estimating the value of their own work; their favorite books among their own writings are not usually the books which their more intelligent readers are agreed to estimate most highly. Max Beerbohm in parody of Max Beerbohm would be very likely to miss the spirit as widely (and with as amusing an effect) as he did in parody of Henry James.

In speaking of that word by which a writer reveals

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himself I have not in mind, of course, one word out of the dictionary to which one author has secured exclusive rights. The word may be any little word, but its importance is determined by the words around it. I shall give some examples. The results of the contest are not to be announced until the January issue of the magazine comes out; but I mean to test my theory in advance by assigning the authorship of several of the pieces. For instance:

The skit entitled "The Invasion of the Sanctuary" is by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The identifying word is *cut* in the context, "even fatigued flappers had turned to religion and were wondering if the man two pews ahead really looked like Valentino, or whether it was just that his hair was cut in the back." Anybody, even Brander Matthews, might have used the word *flappers* or any other word in that sentence, but no one except Fitzgerald would have used the word *cut* at precisely that point of sequence in the sentence. Mr. Fitzgerald is a very clever young man whose greatest ambition as a youth was to be a dashing and aristocratic looking person, with plenty of money, social ease and such clothes and haberdashery that even a Bond Street tailor would think his sense in these matters had been inherited through generations of the right people from the days of William the Conqueror. That is what all his books reveal; that is what his books are about, and that is what, apparently, his books are written for. He has a saving quality of wit, malice and fantastic drollery; otherwise his books would be Robert W. Chambers all over again, only not so well written. The sentence I have quoted shows Fitzgerald at his best, because he is here registering contempt for the flappers who have Valentino in their heads. You see, Fitzgerald thinks that Valentino is the wrong

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sort of person for women of brains and beauty to be wondering about: Valentino would be all right if his hair were cut *à la* Princeton in the back, parted in the middle, and if it were blond instead of black. Do you recall the hero's solemn ruminations in "This Side of Paradise" of the absurd notion that all the great men in the world have been blue-eyed blonds? Mr. Fitzgerald is a blue-eyed blond.

"The Episode of the Bean Shooter" is by Heywood Broun. The identifying word is *kind* in the context, "To this day, if any lady were kind enough to me to say, 'I suppose you are a gay dog,' I know I should smile a weak protest, blush a little, drop my head and try to make her believe that the charge had hit home." Something happened to Mr. Broun in his youth or boyhood, which he has never got over—something that accounts for his interest in the care and bringing up of children, and makes the bulk of his literary work an extenuated preoccupation with infants and infantile diversions. He wants babies to have a different sort of start in life from the sort he had. He was, it is pretty easy to figure out, a very self-conscious, diffident, kindly, soft, and timid kid who got trounced every now and then by the rougher sort of youngsters. He was probably kept dressed like Little Lord Fauntleroy and forced to wear his hair in curls. For this he suffered at the hands of his young contemporaries, and since that time has resolved to neglect his curls, wear his trousers without a crease, teach his own son boxing and baseball and cut a shine in the world of two-fisted, hairy-chested men. A militant anti-militarist, he loves to watch two pugilists batter each other into bloody insensibility; a man given to sedentary recreations, such as poker and the drama, he loves to write about

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baseball and football events. Remembrances of those early disquietudes now and then come over him, and (for he is an honest and ingenuous fellow) he doesn't mind being a little self-consciously humble. The literary effect is good: nothing endears a writer with his public so quickly as humility, natural or assumed.

"The Seven Sins That Weren't Sinned" is by Arthur Symons. The identifying word is *infernal* in the context, "she went on whispering words infernal and intolerable." Mr. Symons is the only survivor of the Yellow Nineties who hasn't got over that period's vocabulary and that period's callow notions about women, sin and hell.

"The Girl in the Alley" is by Thomas Burke. The identifying word is *yellow* in the context, "It was a long lilac-tinted alley, where beautiful girl-children lingered in doorways and aged heads peered from upper windows. It was locked away from the noisy highways, and to it the yellow howl of the hooter and the blue note of bells across the water came only faintly." You would suspect that Mr. Burke wrote this because of the abuse of alliteration; but you may be pretty sure it is only he who would use the expression *yellow howl*.

Among the other authors of the skits are Joseph Hergesheimer, George Jean Nathan, G. K. Chesterton, Stephen Leacock, and, I suspect, St. John Ervine. To explain why I think so would entail reasons which would seem more ungracious than I should like to offer concerning these estimable men. . . . Whether my assignments are accurate or not, my theory holds water, and if it fails it is only because of a hastily inaccurate application of it. At least two of the skits are by writers with whose work I am not sufficiently acquainted to apply my theory. One of them may be A. A. Milne, whose stuff bores me so

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unutterably I have never been able to read more than three sentences at a time of it. . . . It is a satisfaction to record that among this choice lot of little angels not one of them, it appears, except F. Scott Fitzgerald, ever did anything which by the widest stretch of the adjective might be called disgraceful. Indeed, Fitzgerald's skit is the only one that is at all amusing. "After suppering heavily" he (I am sure it is he) relates, one Christmas Eve he felt religion descend upon him. "My sins were washed away and I felt, as my host strained a drop or so from the ultimate bottle, that my life was beginning all over again. 'Yes,' I said, softly drawing on my overshoes, 'I will go to church. I will find some friend and, sitting next to him, we will sing the Christmas hymns.' . . . I entered quietly and walked up the aisle, searching the silent ranks of the faithful for some one whom I could call friend. But no one hailed me. In all the church there was no sound but the metallic rasp of the buckles on my overshoes. At the very foot of the pulpit a kindly thought struck me—perhaps inspired by the faint odor of sanctity which exudes from the saintly man. I spoke. 'Don't mind me,' I said. 'Go on with the sermon.'"

(NOTE: Mr. Rascoe's assignments of the authorship of each of the skits, by a happy fate, proved to be correct.—C. H. G.)



FIRST VISIT TO DREISER

Monday, December 18.

This afternoon I went to see Theodore Dreiser, who has come on from Hollywood for the winter and is living in St. Luke's Place, next door to Sherwood Anderson.

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Although we had exchanged brief notes from time to time for several years, I had never met Dreiser until to-day. He is more youthful looking than I expected him to be, remembering that he published "Sister Carrie" more than twenty years ago. He is tall, without superfluous flesh and only slightly stooped. His hair is gray, his eyes deep-set, his cheeks so full as to seem puffy, his lips thick. He has no gestures and is the most immobile writer I ever saw, apparently capable of sitting at ease for an hour without moving a muscle. His voice is well modulated, soft and without any nasal quality. He speaks slowly, with the average stammer, and there is a certain air of humility and gentleness in his bearing. I got from him the same sort of impression of dogged persistency, honesty, sincerity, frankness and hungry curiosity about life that I get from his writings. He greeted me with a friendly casualness one has toward friends of long standing. He had a sheaf of manuscript in his hand and after he had got a match for my cigarette (he doesn't smoke) he sat down and explained, in a timid and bashful manner that he had been writing poems and that he was anxious to know what I thought of them. He said he would like to send me the batch of poems he has written over a long period of years and have me make frank notes of comment on each one.

"They are free verse sort of things," he said. "Just moods and impressions and attempts to get into a few words something I feel about the color and beauty and strangeness of life. I have been writing them off and on for years. I don't know whether they are any good or not, but they are things I had to write just the way they are written."

I asked him to read some of them to me, knowing that

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I had been much more sympathetic toward Sherwood Anderson's "Mid-American Chants" after hearing Sherwood recite them than I had upon reading them in *The Little Review*; but Dreiser picked out five and handed them to me. I had almost wanted to laugh when he told me he was writing poetry, so redundant, cacophonous and deficient in word values as he is in his prose; but these strange pieces had life and heart in them, like his plodding, cumbrous novels, and moreover, they have the impress of authentic poetic emotion. Here was ineluctable sadness with a poignancy in no way rhetorical, glimpses of beauty caught in images from life in a city street—astonishing things, really, yet somehow the sort of fumbling grasps of poetic essentials one would expect of him did one ever think of him expressing himself in verse, free or otherwise.

He works daily, he told me, from 10 until 3 or 4, uninterruptedly without lunching. He is still writing "The Bulwark," the third volume of the trilogy which includes "The Financier" and "The Titan," and he has also written eight of a series of fifteen portraits of women, which is to be a companion volume to "Twelve Men." That book, "Twelve Men," he said, is apparently the best liked of all his books. More copies of it have been sent to him for his signature than of all the others combined.

He recited to me without bitterness, indeed with an amused resignation, the rebuffs he had had, the difficulties he still encounters in finding a market for his writings, the hostility of the reviewers, the trenchant personal abuse that has been heaped upon him gratuitously by critics, the hard time he has had in making a living. Of the series of fine and original portraits in "Twelve Men" he was able to dispose of only one to a magazine, al-

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though, he said, "I hawked them all in every editorial office. Everybody said they were no good until after they came out in book form and critics here and there began to praise them. Then the editors wanted me to write more like them."

Dreiser's tenacity of purpose in the face of all possible odds against him has been not the least noble aspect of his writing career. Against a storm of critical derision, mere indignation, the hounding of the vice society, rejection slips, insufficient financial returns, discouragements and abuse, he has made no compromise whatever; he has expressed himself unequivocally, sincerely, as he felt. He is at once a proud and humble man, without arrogance or a sense of martyrdom, driven by a desire to write of life as he sees and knows it, as well and as truthfully as he can. He moved, a pathmaker, with heavy crunching, powerful steps, through the brambles and thickets of American literary prejudice, making way for a host of more graceful but less powerful writers to follow him, and who in the blithe heedlessness of youth will never be properly grateful for the work he has done until it turns out, as it reasonably may, that he has done not the most artistic but the most significant work of his period in America's age of democratic industrialism, that it was his genius which most accurately reflected the peculiar aspects of that age.

(The poems referred to were finally published in 1927 as "Moods Cadenced and Declaimed." The portraits of women are to be published as "A Gallery of Women." Mr. Rascoe has published a monograph on Dreiser, "Theodore Dreiser," R. M. McBride Co.—C. H. G.)



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A SKETCH OF WALLACE STEVENS

Wednesday, December 20.

Carl Van Vechten told me that Wallace Stevens has at last been prevailed upon to bring out a collection of his verse in book form. Knopf is to publish the volume in the spring or fall. Stevens is, I think, one of the most original and most talented of our contemporary American poets. He is an insurance lawyer in Hartford; a huge, non-literary sort of person, who seldom talks shop, and refuses to discuss his poems, so shy and modest is he about them. His wife is an exquisite little woman who posed for the face of Liberty on the new dimes.

(The volume referred to appeared under the title "Harmonium." Mr. Rascoe's favorite poem in the collection, he has recorded, is "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle."—C. H. G.)



JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON

Friday, December 22.

Anzia Yzierska, author of "Hungry Hearts" and "Salome of the Tenements," asked me to lunch to-day to meet James Harvey Robinson, the author of "The Mind in the Making," that remarkable history of ideas which has now been on the best selling lists for nearly a year. . . . Dr. Robinson, a tired-looking, gray-haired little man, somewhere in the sixties, I should say, with the humorous twinkle of a skeptic in his eye, came in after a while and sat down, saying nothing until something came up about education, particularly about graduate in-

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stitutions. He was unequivocal in his strictures upon a college education, saying that under our educational system the four or six or eight years in college are ordinarily only so much waste of valuable time; that in any group of college graduates there is nothing to distinguish them, intellectually, from men who have not been to school; that most graduate students are men who have been unable to come to terms with life and are deferring contact with it under the supposition that by reading and study they will find some magic formula which will enable them to get on. The reason college students seldom learn anything is that the subjects are taught by men who are not at all interested in the subjects they are teaching. "A professor will be giving a course of lectures on the French Revolution," he said. "He has given it over and over again, always out of books, as if it were an isolated phenomenon, unrelated to life, and since he is not vitally interested in it himself he cannot communicate any interest to his students."

Dr. Robinson startled me somewhat by saying that he thought John Dewey's "Human Nature and Conduct" and the volume that preceded it were the "two greatest works of philosophy ever written." Frank Moore Colby said something of the sort to me a few months ago, and I made a mental note to get hold of these works as soon as possible. Some one at the table said Dewey was not clear or easy for the layman to read, but Dr. Robinson said that Dewey was so busy with his problems that he had not time to learn the art of expressing his ideas in terms every one could understand and that people who came after him could do that for him.

Like most of the modern psychologists, Dr. Robinson puts little faith in what ordinarily passes for thought, find-

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ing greater significance in emotion. Above all, he has a contempt for what he calls "the old logicians' method of reasoning." He is, he says, skeptical of all abstract doctrines and generalities. One of our greatest problems, he says, is that of getting the human race out of its infantile stage of emotion and intelligence. We grow up in awe and fear or admiration for our parents, and as we go through life we keep on transferring that awe, fear or admiration to other people or things, even abstractions, relying too little upon ourselves, passing the buck to others for our failures, never growing up. One thing he said impressed me greatly because it is the philosophical kernel of my belief in the impossibility of objective criticism. It is: "There can be no objectivity, because an object is comprehended only subjectively." An object may have an existence in itself, but we can know that object only as it exists in our minds. A form of agreement among men of recognized taste and intelligence may be reached, say, in regard to certain points considered to be merits in a work of art, and in so far as one critic is able to delineate those points he may be said to write objective criticism, but even that sort of objectivity is subjective after all.



DREISER, CONSERVATIVE EDITOR

Tuesday, December 26.

At lunch Arthur Vance told me about the days when he worked for Dreiser when Dreiser was editor of a woman's magazine, and how in those days Dreiser was the most cautious of editors, afraid of new ventures and

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new suggestions, and trying out nothing until he had called for "The Bible" (*The Ladies' Home Journal*) to see whether it already had the sanction of Edward Bok. This is amusing to me, because it was only the other day that Dreiser was telling me that editors haven't the courage to publish something new, unusual, out of the regular run of stuff. Mr. Vance has had the courage to publish a great number of hitherto unheard of writers of merit, and to go counter to editorial superstitions without any appreciable falling off of circulation. On the contrary. . . .



IN DEFENSE OF T. S. ELIOT

Saturday, December 30.

To lunch with Gilbert Seldes and Edmund Wilson, Jr., and we were all in a happy frame of mind over the imminence of Gilbert's departure for Europe. We drew up a telegram to Lee Wilson Dodd suggesting that he write a parody of "The Waste Land" and another one to John Farrar (who has finally decided not just to ignore T. S. Eliot but to attack him), begging John not to lend the weight of his influence to the growing opposition to Eliot. Gilbert, who is grave about everything, even about Joe Cook and Krazy Kat, said John would take the telegram seriously, but I thought that would make it all the better.

We made merry over the fact that here were gathered together three critics looked upon as arch-conspirators in the effort to palm off on the public an unintelligible poem by an obscure scribbler as the great poetic work of the year.

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Eliot, of course, is about as obscure among the literate as Rudolph Valentino is among movie fans; Clive Bell, the English critic, went so far as to say recently that Eliot is the most considerable poet writing in English, being not unmindful of the fact that William Butler Yeats, John Masefield and Thomas Hardy are still alive; and although the bulk of Eliot's work is very small, he has had the greatest influence perhaps of any one poet living upon the work of the younger men.

And "The Waste Land" is not unintelligible. It is, naturally enough, unintelligible to people who read it as carelessly as, say, Keith Preston does. Keith quotes the

*O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter;
They wash their feet in soda water.*

And then he comments: "As persiflage it has its points. The phantasy of moonlit damsels washing their feet in ice cream soda water has a sort of Kubla Khandy store flavor that we find refreshing." The poem says nothing about "ice cream soda water"; it says plain soda water, a not uncommon bath for tired and swollen feet. To comprehend the mood and meaning of these few lines is to comprehend the mood and meaning of the whole poem. The poem is, as I have said before, tragic in mood; it is akin to a dirge or lament, but it differs from the usual tragic poem in that it is keyed sardonically, not romantically, as for instance, is "The Lament for Bion," or prophetically, as for instance, are the lamentations of the Old Testament, or wrathfully, as is "The Revolt of Islam," or philosophically as is Goethe's "Faust." Its sardonic quality is peculiarly modern.

Eliot sings, to put the matter quite simply, the diminu-

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tion of energy in the world. "Faith," says Elie Faure, "is the religious name we give energy"; it is the decline of faith, of energy, that Eliot in this poem laments. Modern life, he says, is arid, without a driving faith, lacking in the great dreams and illusions which sent men in quest of the Holy Grail, impelled Columbus to cross the Atlantic and made possible all the great epochs in history we call progress. To emphasize this he selects lines from great poets, from Sappho, from Ovid, from Virgil, from Shakespeare, from Spenser, from Dante, who celebrated beauty with a great faith, and revises their sentiments in consonance with the arid drabness of modern life.

One has but to compare the nuptial passages in the "Æneid" with its modern counterpart (as Eliot sees it) in the expeditious, listless affair Eliot relates between the typist and the young house agent's clerk to see the similarity and the violent contrast. Virgil's celebration of Dido's love for Æneas is the finest flight of his poetic fancy. Everything is lovely; everything is perfect; Aphrodite and Juno unite in making things nice for the lovers. Eliot, in contrast, pictures a modern love scene in a great city, London: A young typist, tired out from a day's work, returns to her hall bedroom for her meal hastily prepared from cheap canned goods. There is a bed that serves her as a divan, piled with articles of dress. Her lover is a brisk, self-satisfied animal without sentiment or delicacy who expedites matters, "bestows one patronizing kiss" and descends the stairs. Meanwhile how does this modern Dido of the tenements regard her encounter with her Æneas? Goldsmith has written:

*When lovely lady stoops to folly
And finds too late that men betray,*

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What charm can soothe her melancholy?

What art can wash her guilt away?

And Virgil had voiced that sentiment when he makes Dido soothe her melancholy in suicide. But, sings Eliot:

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,

Hardly aware of her departed lover;

Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:

"Well, now that's done; and I'm glad it's over."

When lovely woman stoops to folly and

Paces about her room again, alone,

She smooths her hair with automatic hand,

And puts a record on the gramophone.

The modern Dido of the tenements, says Eliot, is too fatigued, too disillusioned, too cynical, to take love seriously, to make it a purposeful, energizing thing. She says "That's that" and thinks no more about it.

Again, the poet Day sings:

A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring

Actæon to Diana in the spring.

While Eliot paraphrases it with a bitter twist:

The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring

Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.

O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter

And on her daughter;

They wash their feet in soda water.

Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

There is "ape-necked Sweeney" of a former comic poem by Eliot playing Actæon to Mrs. Porter's Diana. There is the reminiscent parody of the once popular bal-

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lad, "The Moon Shines Bright on Pretty Red Wing," a quick juxtaposition of an anti-climax in the image of Mrs. Porter and her daughter bathing their swollen feet in soda water, and a sardonic employment of the loveliest line from one of the loveliest of Verlaine's religious poems, "Parsifal."

Throughout "The Waste Land" this method of contrasts by parodies, alterations and distorted images is pursued by Eliot with a result in perhaps the most sardonic poem in the language. To say that the poem lacks beauty is to delimit the word beauty to such qualities as "sweetness," "prettiness," "exalted sentiment," etc., which have, strictly, little to do with beauty, even though a beautiful poem may be at the same time sweet and pretty and exalted. "The Waste Land" is as rich in poetic fallacy as any poem by Marlowe or Keats, but it is poetic fallacy of a different sort.

To say that life is not as bad as it is depicted in this poem is silly and irrelevant; of course it isn't; neither is it as good as life is depicted in the Eclogues of Virgil.



LITERARY HISTORY OF CHICAGO

Sunday, December 31.

Hazel and I went to dinner to-night at the home of Miss Dorothy Scarborough, who gives courses in the short story at Columbia and is the author of "The Supernatural in English Fiction." We found there Miss Dorothy Brewster, Prof. John Lyon and John Weaver, and after dinner, with Weaver there to prod my memory with: "Tell them about the time"—, I related anecdotes of Chicago literary activity until nearly midnight.

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The more incredible and comical aspects of that feverish period began, I believe, about the time that Margaret Anderson, a beautiful girl eager for culture, came up from the provinces and by sheer force of personality got money for and began issuing *The Little Review*. It was a lordly and belligerent little magazine from the first, and Miss Anderson, having only an instinct for and no training in, æsthetic matters, sublimely ignorant, but sublimely assured, gathered around her most of the men and women who were seeking individual self-expression, without regard to what tradition had dictated—Carl Sandburg, Ezra Pound, Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Lee Masters, Ben Hecht, Stanislaus Szukalski, Maxwell Bodenheim, Alfred Kreymborg, Vachel Lindsay, Alexander Kaun, John Cowper Powys, Dr. George Burman Foster, Llewellyn Jones, Jane Heap and dozens of others. *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* had already gained an international reputation and was printing contributions from England, France and Italy, as well as from America; and Maurice Browne had got his Little Theater much talked about, and Miss Mary Garden had helped the interest created in Chicago as a musical center by the late Theodore Thomas and his superb orchestra; but Miss Anderson sounded the proper note of youthful revolt, "no compromise with the public taste," and printed stories and poems by Anderson, Sandburg, Bodenheim and Hecht, which had been turned down by every magazine in the country. Europeans began to send contributions; *The Little Review* paid nothing, but poets, artists, novelists, musicians in France and England showed a lively interest in the magazine and considered it an honor to appear in it. Remy de Gourmont wrote that it was the only magazine in English that was not moribund, the only

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one in which he cared to appear. Lord Dunsany sent a story and Miss Anderson returned it, saying, "Why do you send us such drool? Try it on *The Atlantic Monthly*."

There followed, inevitably, quarrels and professional jealousies, acrimonious debates, schisms, critical wars; all of which showed that art was, with these young people, a living issue, not a museum exhibit.

There came the Dill Pickle club, founded by an out-of-work paperhanger, who was said to have been a bomb-maker for the sabotage squad from the I. W. W., and whose curious forum was attended by about an equal proportion of North Shore society leaders, University of Chicago professors and of pickpockets, morons, soapbox atheists and derelicts of all kinds. Yeats and Robert Nichols, St. John Ervine and Frank Harris, Alfred Kreymborg and Emma Goldman, poets, editors, novelists, lectured or recited there and endured afterward the splenetic, ludicrous, ridiculous heckling of the crowd.

There was the time when Margaret Anderson stood in the corridor of the Fine Arts building impatiently inquiring when the revolution was going to begin; there was the time when Ben Hecht's "Dregs" was put on by a Little Theater group on the south side and the first words uttered by the central character set ears atingle and tongues gabbing for weeks; there was the time when Bodenheim smoked a pipe four and a half feet long on Michigan Avenue and asked pedestrians to light it for him; there was the time when Waldo Frank was guest of honor at Tennessee Mitchell's house and sat saucer eyed with amazement while two literary antagonists fought for five hours steadily over literature, calling each other names adroitly; there was the time a poet who has a mania for sympathy bandaged his arm which he said

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he had broken and lived for three weeks at the house of another poet, having everything done for him, until the host insisted that the bandages be changed for fear of gangrene, only to discover that the arm was not injured at all; there was the time when Carl Sandburg and Ben Hecht framed on W. L. George at luncheon so that every time George asked silly questions about the erotic propensities of American women in highly euphemistic and technical terms they would answer him in such coarse and obscene words as they had not thought of since the days they had seen them chalked up on outhouses, making George blush to the roots of his hair and choke violently with embarrassment; and there was the time when Ben Reitman introduced Emma Goldman at the most exclusive social-literary society in Chicago with a short dissertation on sex, which sent women screeching from the room—this same Ben, who has now become an ardent Christian and a most respectable citizen; and there was the time—but these anecdotes are almost inexhaustible; they often sound incredible, and many of the best ones cannot be related here.

Chicago's literary renaissance had its comical and ironical side, but it is a lively and, I think, a healthy event. It had more vigor and independence than the one that preceded it—the period of the Whitechapel club and the "Chapbook" crowd, strange cultural phenomena in what was then the most material and ugly of cities, a period of literary activity which produced a short-lived little magazine which was the first one in English to take notice of the French symbolists, the first to publish translations of Mallarme. Associated with this period were Percival Pollard, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Hamlin Garland, Vance Thompson, Finley Peter Dunne, George

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Ade, Eugene Field, Herbert Stone, Henry Blake Fuller, Harrison Rhodes, Hobart Chatfield Chatfield-Taylor, Ella W. Peattie, Opie Read and that chap whose name I forget and whose admirers say Jack London plagiarized in "Before Adam." This group was, of course, long before my time, but I have heard much about it from Robert Burns Peattie, John Stahl and others, and I hope that some day Peattie or H. B. Fuller will give us a history of it.

There are times when I have doubts about the directive utility of criticism, but before I leave off this subject I wish to record my belief that the initial stimulus to the period which flowered in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, *The Little Review*, the Little Theater and all those things in Chicago came from a two-page weekly review of books in *The Post*. On the paper at that time were Francis Hackett, Floyd Dell, Julian Mason, Tiffany Blake and Percy Hammond. Hackett and Dell had a vast enthusiasm for modern literature and an equally vast enthusiasm for life. They had a free hand. They made of their section a living thing. They introduced Chicago readers to Gorky, Dostoievsky, Tolstoy, Samuel Butler, Strindberg, Shaw, Ibsen and a host of others. They wrote with a gusto, without pendency or academic fussian. They wrote about literature in terms of Chicago. Hackett came on to New York and was succeeded by Dell, who was in turn succeeded by Lucian and Augusta Carey, who also came to New York, leaving the department in the hands of Llewellyn Jones, the first critic in this country to hail Joseph Hergesheimer, Lascelles Abercrombie, and Walter de la Mare.



I-9-2-3

ÆSTHETICS OF THE WOOLWORTH BUILDING

Thursday, January 4.

When I left the office at 3 o'clock this morning the blizzard had died down, leaving City Hall Square deep with snow. Across the velvet whiteness the Woolworth hunched, head erect, in spectral majesty like an enormous cat against gray, blue-tinted sky. And as that beauty made this vault a feasting presence I tried to disengage the emotions that I felt. Here was a work of art (and utility) viewed under peculiarly advantageous circumstances: its outlines were softened by the night, its penumbra melted in a natural chiaroscuro, there was an attendant silence and a foretaste of dawn. Is this thing I feel (and it is pleasureable), I asked, a pure æsthetic sensation, or is it a compound in which are mingled admiration, wonder, gratitude and negation of self? I could not tell; but I glowed no less and trudged on through the snow, elate, whither a telephone message had directed. . . .



A PASSAGE IN "THE WASTE LAND"

Friday, January 5.

A number of correspondents have asked me to explain the meaning of the following lines in "The Waste Land":

*"Twit, twit, twit.
Jug, jug, jug, jug, jug,
So rudely forc'd
Tereu."*

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Eliot has here employed for a musical effect an imitation of the sound of birds in the same way that Aristophanes employs the "breka-kek-kek-coax-coax" in imitation of the croaking of the frogs in his choruses. In doing this Eliot has not violated precedent: the "twit-twit" and "jug-jug" are used by Nash in his poem "Spring," and both words may be found in any decent dictionary.

References to the nightingale occur frequently in the poem. In a passage anticipating the lines quoted above and for which he has a note referring to the lines quoted, he makes poetical use of the Greek legend concerning Philomela:

*"The change of Philomela, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced." . . .*

Philomela, or Philomel, as you will find by turning to the nearest dictionary, was ravished by Tereus because she and Procne, wife of Tereus, had slain Itys, his son. Philomela was changed into a nightingale, Procne into a swallow and Tereus into a hawk. Matthew Arnold celebrates the legend in his poem "Philomela," wherein he, too, like Eliot, follows Spenser in designating the Thames as "sweet."



A TALK WITH ROBERT FROST

January 6.

Went to Lawton Mackall's house-warming in the new offices of *Snappy Stories* and *Popular Radio* and found there Robert Frost, Carl Van Doren, Harry Kemp,

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Christopher Morley, Kendall Banning, Robert McBride, Pierre Loving, Milton Raison, Hugo Reisenberg, Adolphe Roberts and a host of others. Thomas Facett gave a very funny imitation of a village choir and Chris Morley kidded Mackall about his magazine very amusingly, and then read some pieces he said were imitations of "The Waste Land" and other modern poems. If what he read bears the slightest resemblance to "The Waste Land" then I'm the Prophet Jeremiah and all his lamentations.

Kemp is a hulking fellow with a red face, a surly mouth and eyes which wear a look of surprise. Robert Frost in voice and demeanor reminds me much of Sherwood Anderson. He has the same deliberate and ingenuous way of speaking; he is earnest, earthy, humorous, without put on, very real, likable, genuine. I admire him very much as a person. I regret that I find almost nothing to interest me in his poems. They are deft, they are competent, they are of the soil; but they are not distinctive. Frost and I left the party together and went to Grand Central Station, where we talked for half an hour about Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Conrad Aiken and Amy Lowell. He astonished me somewhat by telling me that Professor John Livingston Lowes, author of "Convention and Revolt in Poetry" (an excellent treatise, in so far as it touches poets established by time), snaps his fingers in dismissal of T. S. Eliot, and that in doing so at a recent encounter at Miss Amy Lowell's house he had incurred the wrath of William Rose Béné. Frost himself has little sympathy with Eliot's work, but then he wouldn't have naturally: his own æsthetic problem is radically different from that of Eliot's. "I don't like obscurity in poetry," he told me, voicing the familiar complaint; "I don't think a thing ought to be obvious

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before it is said, but it ought to be obvious when it is said. I like to read Eliot because it is fun seeing the way he does things, but I am always glad it is his way and not mine."

I take it to be self-evident that those who talk of Eliot's "obscurity" are using the word as a defense through an inability to derive any emotional response from it. But why should one defend himself, especially upon such unreasonable grounds? There is no law requiring one to read Eliot and like his work. "That is poetry," says Saintsbury, "that is poetry to a man which produces on him such poetical effects as he is capable of receiving"; and, adds Professor Lowes, "that is poetry to a critic which produces on him such poetical effects as he is capable of perceiving." Obscurity is a term to be used only in connection with prose, the medium of exact ideas. One of the primary differences between poetry and prose is that prose denotes and poetry connotes. A poem may be as obscure as Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and the Turtle," or as explicit as his Hundred and Thirty-eighth Sonnet without affecting its poetic content whatever.

"I have heard that Joyce wrote 'Ulysses' as a joke," said Frost to me, repeating what I have heard a dozen times from the credulous about both "Ulysses" and "The Waste Land." Dismissing for a moment the absurdity of the notion that a penniless man in ill health would spend four years writing a half million-word novel without hope of adequate remuneration merely as a joke, whether he did or not, would have nothing whatever to do with its artistic significance and importance. The first principle of æsthetic judgment is that the critic be concerned with the achievement, not with the motives prompting it. Sin-

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cerity, as we ordinarily understand the term, has nothing whatever to do with art. "The truest poetry," says Shakespeare, "is the most feigning," and Verlaine's "Art Poétique" no less than the essays by Coleridge, Dryden and Poe testify to the irrelevancy of "sincerity." All the sincerity in the world does not make Mr. Harold Bell Wright's "When a Man's a Man" a work of art. There is evidence to support the belief that Shakespeare never wrote a "sincere" play in his life.

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A PARODY OF THE "DAYBOOK"

Percy Hammond, the praisician, carried among his oddments and remainders this morning a delicious burlesque of "A Bookman's Day Book," by Samuel Hoffenstein. It was a hit, a very palpable hit, by far the best of the numerous take-offs on this justly popular feature.

(I have thought it not impertinent, but in fact a contribution to the gayety of nations, to reprint the burlesque here, together with Mr. Hammond's introduction. It follows.—C. H. G.):

Mr. A. H. Woods, a foremost Broadway impresario, wonders why the details of his fertile days should not be recorded in the public prints, as are the adventures of others who are less significant and influential than he is upon life and the drama. Mr. Woods's astonishment, of course, is not serious. He is the most jocund of the Broadway entrepreneurs, and his favorite disguise is that of a satyr playing popular pranks upon the theater and its customers. Therefore, he has suggested to us and to Mr. Samuel Hoffenstein [at that time Woods's press agent] that we collaborate

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with him in the composition of a harlequinade in whose trifling contents a grave, satiric atom or two may be discovered. The frolic, if so it may be called, is Mr. Woods's and Mr. Hoffenstein's. We have merely improved it by excisions and amendments. Following are the whimsical minutes of an average Al Woods's week-end—P. H.

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Sunday, December 24.

Meg and I were busy all day fixing the Christmas tree for the kiddies. Ate chicken liver sandwiches at intervals. John Muller tells me that Augustin Daly was fond of them. I read also in Yankel Yankelovitch's "Chicken Livers and Analogous Dishes Among Ancient Peoples Living North of the Danube and East of Metz" that the Scythians made a pastry of strange muscles which was considered a great delicacy.

I took my contract with the Shuberts, which expires next month, and hung it on the tree, adorned with sprays of asphodel and sprinkled with cypress seeds.

Little Rutherford clapped his hands delightedly and sang.

*"Now you're through with Jake and Lee,
What a happy guy you'll be."*

He is very precocious, and reads articles by Edwin Björkman, Brander Matthews and both the Hamiltons, Cosmo and Clayton.

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Slept late, and then lay thinking of the No. 4 company of "The Girl in the Taxi." I cursed while lacing my shoes—I hate high shoes, Ben Greet and Winthrop Ames. Looked out of the window and was surprised to notice the board fences. Read the *Staats-Zeitung*, and was struck by the fact that German script looks less queer to people who know German than to those who do not. Drank three cups of coffee and wondered what Shakespeare would have had for breakfast if he were with me. Professor Fishelbein, in his interesting brochure, "Some Deductions on Shakespeare's Culinary Taste, Based on His Description of King Lear's Whiskers," proves that he was fond of both sweet and sour fish.

In the afternoon Dave Altman, Charlie Pinkernelly, Henri Messenger, Walter Moore, Dick Moon and several others dropped in and we discussed 24-sheet stands. Walter Moore told me some interesting things about the posters used by the wilder Bedouins to announce an impending raid. Mr. Messenger talked of his experiences in Tacoma, Washington, with a naughty totem-pole. We cracked nuts and told some frightful stories. At tea time Jack Dempsey and William Butler Yeats called with Granville Barker, Dunsany, the Seven Sutherland Sisters, the Five Brown Brothers and Power's Elephants. The Brown Brothers played the saxophone over the children's cribs, stimulating their slumbers. Meg sat quietly by and read the notices of "The Masked Woman."

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Meg woke me up and asked me if I knew what day yesterday was. I said no, and she told me it was

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Christmas. I was awfully sorry, and gave her the French Lick motion picture rights of "The Love Child" to make amends. While taking my bath J. M. Barrie, Morris Gest, Bernard Shaw, Maxim Gorki, Anatole France, Stanislavsky and Max Marcin dropped in. I talked to them from the bathroom. I was pleased to hear that Barrie had also forgotten it was Christmas. He is a cross, gruff man, and he told me the words "Merry Xmas" always angered him. Anatole France showed me his Nobel Prize. While we were talking little Rutherford fell out of the window. Shaw and Barrie sat smoking their pipes; Marcin kept outlining the plot of a new melodrama, while Anatole went on talking about Samuel Shipman and his superiority to Dumas and Winchell Smith. Mr. Erlanger, who was passing when Rutherford fell, picked him up and declared it a great stunt, suggesting that it be booked in Shubert vaudeville. After a while Shaw went out and returned with his arms full of salami and pretzels, and we made a feast of it.

In the evening, after the others had gone, I read some Greek translations of old Yiddish tragedies. I find I am not so fluent in the Attic tongue as I am in the older Persian dialects, which I cannot account for. Went to bed about 10, but about 2:30 in the morning the telephone rang. It was John Peter Toohey, Ibsen and some friends returning from Brooklyn, asking if they could come up. They arrived at 3 o'clock—Ibsen, Björnson, Strindberg, S. Jay Kaufman, one of the Duncan girls and two Icelandic playwrights, whose works I have not read in weeks. We sat around until dawn, smoking our pipes in silence.

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Then I went to bed. But only to be awakened a little later by Channing Pollock and Dr. Frank Crane, who said that they had been holding their own in a bout at the Cooper Institute with Ben Hecht and Avery Hopwood—Maeterlinck, Ring Lardner and Æ being the umpires. A full day, my diary, and, as Mr. Dillingham would say, "you don't know the half of it."



ROBERT FROST'S POETRY

Sunday, January 7.

After meeting Robert Frost yesterday I resolved to read some of his poems again, with the hope that I might find them more interesting than I have hitherto; and this morning I took down the anthology of American poetry Conrad Aiken compiled for Martin Secker, the English publisher, and read "Home Burial," "The Road Not Taken," "The Wood Pile," "The Fear" and "Birches." "The Road Not Taken" is the only one that awakened anything in me; the rest I found nicely etched little dramatic episodes wherein the commonplaces of speech are employed with good effect—no more; and before I had read all that Aiken selected I found myself turning the pages until I hit upon Edwin Arlington Robinson's beautiful and powerful poem "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man From Stratford," a philosophical and critical monologue in the grand manner which I have read, I imagine, at least thirty times, and then I read again Robinson's "The Man Against the Sky," a poem with so perfect a title that you foreknow all it will contain.



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THE "WASTE LAND" CONTROVERSY

Friday, January 12.

To Edmund Wilson, Jr.'s after the theater, and thence to Elinor Wylie's, where we talked of this and that, and Wilson told me that Louis Untermeyer had an attack on "The Waste Land" in the current *Freeman*, wherein he, too, voiced the notion that a group of us are conspiring to mislead the public. "He quotes the 'When lovely woman stoops to folly' passage," said Wilson, "and says that it is doggerel which would be refused in the cheapest of daily columns. He calls us Eliot's 'frenetic admirers' and 'younger cerebralists.'"

On the way home I got the magazine and read Louis's article. He is plainly on the defensive throughout and he resorts to cheap epithets directed not against Eliot or his poem, but against the people who like it. His opening sentence is a disingenuous distortion of fact to score an irrelevant point: "*The Dial's* award to Mr. T. S. Eliot and the subsequent book-publication of his 'The Waste Land' have occasioned a display of some of the most enthusiastically naïve superlatives that have ever issued from publicity sophisticated enthusiasts." The implication is that the enthusiasm is consequent to *The Dial's* award. The facts are these: I read the poem in galley proofs from Boni & Liveright's office and wrote about it in an article for *Shadowland* a week or so before *The Dial* had even tried to get "The Waste Land" for magazine publication. Wilson had read the poem in manuscript and written a magazine article about it before the poem's publication in *The Dial* or in book form. *The Dial's* award was not decided upon until weeks after we had all had our separate say on the poem's merit. And

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what is more, none of us had ever talked with the other about the poem until after we had had our say about it. Wilson called me up one night and said he had just been reading "Eliot's new long narrative poem; you want to get hold of it. It's a very extraordinary piece of work." That is all. And if Louis will recall, after the poem's publication in *The Dial*, I called him up one night under a similar impulse only to find that Louis had read the poem and did not like it.

If Louis had judged the poem on æsthetic grounds and had found it wanting, his critique might have been salutary. He makes but one point that is not irrelevant—"the absence of an integrated design"—a point which all of us have made with reference to Eliot's too frequent use of ellipsis and disdain for "wadding," or, as Louis says, "connecting tissue." "Man," Louis winds up grandly, "may be desperately insecure, but he has not yet lost the greatest of his emotional needs, the need to believe in something—even in his disbelief." That is a noble thought, Louis, but what in the world has it to do with Eliot's poem?



HOW MENCKEN AND NATHAN PLAY

Thursday, January 16.

To lunch to-day with H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan, and Mencken told me that Nathan was about to retire from active life because he had been done for good and proper in a review by Johnny Weaver last week; "and Alec Woollcott has been getting after me," said Mencken; "I'll have to tell his brother to give him

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a spanking." "Heine has been expounding a theory," said Nathan, "that the demoralization brought on by the war has been responsible for the decline of the one great social virtue of the Germans—that of keeping appointments on time. It's all nonsense. The Germans never did keep appointments. I am going to send Heine a book called 'The American Credo,' item 979 of which is that Germans appear promptly for appointments. Heinie is the victim of most of the superstitions set forth in that valuable little book."

"Rascoe," said Heinie, pointing to George, "let me introduce you to the Johnny Weaver of the *Smart Set* offices. Now you understand why I live in Baltimore. I couldn't endure frequent contact with such great minds as you have in New York; I'd soon be reduced to the mental level of my negro janitor."

Amid the banter and the disparagement of some of our contemporaries we got in many good words of agreement on the question of the genius of Don Marquis, the high qualities in Dreiser and the work of Sherwood Anderson. Mencken told me that it was Dreiser who first discovered Anderson, that Jefferson Jones asked Dreiser to read "Windy McPherson's Son" and that Dreiser was very enthusiastic about it and wrote so to Mencken at the time. "Dreiser was always discovering great geniuses," said Mencken, "and they all turned out to be flivvers, except Sherwood Anderson. Dreiser thought Harris Merton Lyon, who was the nearest he came to discovering another genius, was as great as De Maupassant; and he was always getting all het up about some new man. There was that Fort fellow who wrote 'The Book of the Damned.' Dreiser thought Fort was greater than Zola and Maupassant put together. That's a side of Dreiser

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that has always been overlooked; he was always going out of his way to boost other novelists. He had a genuine altruistic interest in the development of American literature. He was never afraid or too selfish to take up a new novelist and work hard to win recognition for him. His trouble was that his judgment was faulty. He uncovered too many flivvs."

In the current issue of *Vanity Fair* Aldous Huxley has an article, not a very good one, in which he has a good line about the young critics who are trying desperately to write like old men, and in reading it I thought at once of the contrast to that of the spectacle of Mencken and Nathan. They are both in their forties; they are men of wit, erudition, information, taste and intelligence, and yet neither of them has as yet drawn a long face and put on a judicial or professorial air. They are much younger in spirit, in outlook, in verve, in manner, than most of the younger critics not long out of college, two of whom Ben Ray Redman once characterized viciously by saying: "They have achieved senility before reaching maturity."

Mencken and Nathan are such inveterate playboys that they are always consuming a great deal of time and energy playing practical jokes. On St. Valentine's Day I always get from Mencken one of those comic valentines I have not seen on sale since I was a child, with a grotesque picture and some verses calling me a red-nosed sot who ought to straighten up and be a man, and not long ago I got an invitation to join an anti-Semitic organization, of which J. Montmorency Lubowitz, Sir Hamar Cohen and Anatole Knopf were members, all worked up at some expense of time and money on authentic-looking stationery. Louis Untermeyer gets Yom Kip-

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pur greetings from Mencken every year, with scrolls and doves and embossed designs; and I get from Mencken about once a month some sect's printed pamphlets announcing the second coming of the Messiah, with some such penned inscription from Mencken as "Pass the word on to Percy Hammond. This is authentic. Get ready." Nathan sends me advertisements of medical devices and notices telling where I can get a hand-tailored suit for \$14.98; and Mencken sends me marked copies of *The Congressional Record* and bulletins of the Michigan Authors' Society. Where they find time for all this fooling I don't know; but Nathan looks about eighteen, and Mencken, who is actually younger than Nathan, about twenty-eight.



THE "GREATEST LIVING WRITER" QUESTION

Chris Morley makes the following observation in his "Bowling Green":

In January, 1921, the greatest living writer
was said to be Eugene O'Neill.
In February, Joseph Hergesheimer.
In March, D. H. Lawrence.
In April, F. Scott Fitzgerald.
In May, Robert Charles Benchley.
In June, George Santayana.
In July, James Joyce.
In August, Marcel Proust.
September 1-15, Sinclair Lewis.
September 15-30, James Branch Cabell.
October 1-10, Heywood Broun.
October 10-31, Thomas Mann.

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November 1-15, T. S. Eliot.
November 15-17, Ben Hecht.
November 17-30, Harry Kemp.
December 1-4, Coningsby Dawson.
December 4-13, Stuart P. Sherman.
December 18-23, Dr. Coué.
December 23-31, Will Rogers.

Well, at all events, the list is more diversified than it was five years ago, when, according to the then regnant Chris and Bob Holliday, the greatest living writer was:

In January, Christopher Morley.
In February, Robert Cortes Holliday.
In March, Logan Pearsall Smith.
In April, Christopher Morley.
In May, Christopher Morley.
In June, Robert Cortes Holliday.
In July, Richardson Wright.
In August, Logan Pearsall Smith.
In September, Christopher Morley.
In October, Robert Cortes Holliday.
In November, Logan Pearsall Smith.
In December, Christopher Morley.



A LUNCHEON FOR HILAIRE BELLOC

Friday, March 2.

Went to a luncheon to-day, given by Alexander Woollcott for Hilaire Belloc. Others present were Robert C. Benchley, Christopher Morley, Laurence Stallings, Herbert Bayard Swope, Heywood Broun, Brandon Tynan and Father Duffy. It was the first time I had ever met Father Duffy, who is always spoken of with the warmest

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veneration and the highest respect by all sorts of men with and without church affiliations. It is easy enough to see why. With his serene and amiable countenance, his neatly appraising and tolerant eyes, his firm chin, his sensitive and intelligent features, his evident wit and air of humorous regard for the delicate comedy of life, he commands respect, invites your confidence and inspires your belief in him. No wonder he is called a regular fellow.

Mr. Belloc is a stocky man of middle height in romeos and imprecise tailoring, with a cetic midriff, a rubicund face, belligerent eyes, a tired and rather sulky mouth, closely cropped sandy hair, a small head with no slope to the back and a brogue which at times becomes wholly incomprehensible by reason of his habit of seeming to mumble to himself instead of talking to you. When he is not bored with his subject his words become clear and distinct and melodious, whether he is speaking English or quoting Latin or French. His words then have an air of omniscience and finality; and I have no doubt that he knows a very great deal.

The difficulty which lay against his consummation of perfect effect in olympiation was that there was another man at the table who is also accustomed to saying a thing once and for all—Mr. Swope. The inevitable *impassé* arose. The subject had to do with the racial solidarity of the Germans. The question was not settled, though a great deal of force, inside information and remote and recent history was brought to bear upon it. It was a stimulating experience, no less.

I regret that my first wholly agreeable impression of Mr. Belloc, obtained in conversation with him and Christopher Morley before luncheon, was somewhat blighted

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by his reciting a quatrain in which he called one of his fellow British authors a cad.

Now, "cad" is usually only a snobbish word for some one you do not like or with whose opinions you disagree; it has opprobrious connotations, but it shouldn't have. Its feminine equivalent is "I'm a lady and —— is coarse and common." Mr. Belloc uses the word "cad" very frequently. In his new book "On" he devotes a whole essay to "Cads." It must be said in Mr. Belloc's favor that he was requested to recite the piece of verse. It must also be added that he need not have complied with the request.

"It is on the cards," said Mr. Belloc, apropos of Lytton Strachey's book of essays, in which Strachey has an excellent study of Racine, "that Racine will some day universally be considered superior to Shakespeare." He then descanted upon Racine's style and his psychological subtleties. . . . Mr. Belloc wanted to know who were the best selling novelists in this country and when he was told he said he "would like nothing better than to be a best seller. But, alas, my books never sell more than 4,000 copies. They usually reach that point and then stop." . . . Mr. Belloc has a fondness for ginger ale; he drank three bottles of it during lunch.

Stallings is a chap who was left for dead three days on the battlefield during the late war and one of his legs has been amputated. He has, for all the misery he has been through, the cheeriest and happiest countenance I think I ever beheld; he was the only one at the table who did not seem a little jaded; he is fresh and spirited, jolly and enthusiastic.

Morley, who was one of the original American Belloc fans and who attended one of Mr. Belloc's lectures at

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Oxford, said that he was going through Père Lachaise while he was in Paris some years ago and had come across a tombstone inscribed "Hilaire Belloc," and thought at first that one of his favorite authors had died before he had had a chance to meet him. "That was my grandfather," said Mr. Belloc. "He was a great painter and a great man, but he had a curious mania for fighting cabmen. If they offended him or insulted him about the fare and tip he would always climb up and pound them in the face with his fists. He was a short, slight little man; but the cabbies were always bundled up and at a disadvantage by being seated."

The only book by Belloc I ever really liked was "The Man in the Green Overcoat"; but I have not read all of them.



THE FALLIBILITY OF EDITORS

Saturday, March 17.

Lunched to-day with Ben Ray Redman and Mrs. Redman and Ernest and Madelaine Boyd. Madelaine related that when Louis Hémon, the author of "Maria Chapdelaine," died his literary executors, rummaging through his papers for any scrap that might be published, found the manuscripts of three short stories and sent them to the *Revue de France*, where they were forthwith published and loudly acclaimed as fine examples of Hémon's particular genius and style. Then some one pointed out that the stories weren't Hémon's at all, but translations of three famous short stories by Rudyard Kipling, which Hémon had probably put into French as

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an exercise in style and in order to learn the secret of Kipling's narrative ability. . . . Such is the fallibility of critics and editors.



CABELL'S WORKING HABITS

Tuesday, March 20.

James Branch Cabell has an enviable habit and discipline for a writer. He will muse upon a projected book for a while, and then set a date for beginning work on it. When that day rolls around, come rain, come shine, he sits down at his desk at 9 o'clock in the morning and does not leave off writing, excepting to eat and sleep, until he has finished the first draft. He likes to work at night. He does all his own typing, making usually three complete drafts before he is done, each one of which, until the final one, is a mass of changes, corrections and interlineations, so that the printer's copy is almost an entirely different version from the story as it originally came to him.



THE MORALS OF REVIEWING

Wednesday, March 21.

A reviewer accustomed frequently to apologizing for his acrid method of dismissing all work which does not bring a peculiarly narrow quality of sweetness and light, cites this week, as a model reviewer, the Rev. Sydney Smith, who once began a review of Mme. de Staël's "Delphine" with the words: "This dismal trash."

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Now, the moral and reverend Sydney Smith had, like many of his kind, a strange and interesting personal ethic, as the curious may find by looking into Harriet Martineau's Autobiography. Miss Martineau reports a conversation she had with him, in which she reproached him for the savagery of the critical articles in *The Edinburgh Review*.

"'We were savage,' Sydney Smith admitted. 'I remember (and it was plain that he could not help enjoying the remembrance) how Brougham and I sat trying one night how we could exasperate our cruelty to the utmost. We had got hold of a poor, nervous little vegetarian, who had put out a poor, silly little book, and when we had done our review of it we sat trying to find one more chink, one more crevice, through which we might drop in one more drop of verjuice to eat into his bones.'"

'A fine swine!



AIKEN'S THEORY OF CRITICISM

Saturday, April 14.

Conrad Aiken contributes a provocative essay on "A Basis for Criticism" to the current issue of *The New Republic*. But he concludes with what I believe to be a fallacy. "Art exists primarily," he writes, "for the fulfillment of an important social function, and the only sane, just, proportioned and well-founded criticism will be that which understands this, keeps this constantly in mind, and judges the value of the work in proportion as it performs its function. . . . Nothing appears more likely than that it (criticism) will thus develop a new and terri-

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fyng 'social' puritanism—that it will put certain subjects, certain methods under a ban, preferring, for example, the less to the more sublimated. It may even, ultimately, abolish art altogether.”

I think there is little ground for such social optimism and artistic pessimism. It is hardly likely that human society will ever become so perfect, self-sufficient and liberated that it will have no need for the dreams and visions which are given form in art. All art has, undoubtedly, a social utility—not in the conventional sense, not in the sense of Justice Ford and Mr. Sumner, but in the sense the Greeks employed when they spoke of “the good life.” Still, an innate skepticism as to the infallibility of human reason leads me to suspect that at no time in the history of man will it be possible for one critic to say that such and such a work of art is or is not compatible with the happiness and progress of the human race.

Criticism, according to Aiken, who speaks of criticism erroneously as an exact science instead of as an art, which it is—criticism must in time become a laboratory matter. The author's particular case as regards heredity and environment, he says, must be studied with a clinical exactitude and disinterestedness; the critic must determine whether or not the view of life the author gives us promotes human health and happiness, whether or not the work of art performs a useful social function.

But how is the poor human brain to determine all this? What presumptuous idiot would entertain the notion that he knows what is best for the totality of mankind? Such an attempt at judgment would not be as simple as a case in torts or equity: it would demand omniscience, which is an attribute not yet quite attained even by those critics like Stuart P. Sherman and Paul Elmer More, who appar-

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ently act on the assumption that they are endowed with it.

No; essentially a work of art may even perform a social function in relation to only one person—the one who creates it. There are poems, plays and novels written, pictures painted and music played and composed out of an inner necessity; and this expression in its very liberation of impulses has for the creator a curative and health-giving value. Tragic drama, according to Aristotle, is a social utility in its katharsis of pity and terror; it tends to make sane and substantial citizens out of men who, as civilized human beings, retain many of the primitive instincts of the beasts of the jungle. Art, offering the means of vicarious experience, provides a harmless outlet for emotions which might be socially dangerous. Even pornographic literature has, I am thoroughly convinced, a psycho-therapeutic value. To deprive certain people of it would mean, I believe, that they would languish and senesce, or express themselves in actions which would be harmful to society. That is why I can achieve a certain sympathy for the sad psychopathic condition of those novel reformers who hunt through literary works for phrases and passages at which they may exult and exclaim, "This is obscene, indecent, immoral and a peril to the young!" Peril to the young or not, such passages are the breath of life to these afflicted people. Awaiting the time when pornography will be prescribed them in rations, I can only hope that their insatiable appetites will not prove their own undoing, and that having sought through and banned all books containing the morsels they require, they will be in the sad plight of the drug addict who is unable to obtain the opiate he requires.

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Hazel and I went with Samuel Hoffenstein and Ernest and Madelaine Boyd to a burlesque show in Fourteenth Street to-night and found it good fun. The success of the American burlesque houses when they are not too "refined" is a refutation of the frequent statement on the part of the dramatic critics that the attitude of French audiences toward the treatment of sex in the theater is entirely different from that of American audiences. The salt of the earth who patronize the burlesque houses respond to and demand the same coarse, vulgar and farcical treatment of sex relished by the salt of the earth in France.

Coming out of the theater we were offered salacious postcards by a dozen boys. "Now the final excuse of Americans for going to Paris is removed," said Boyd. "Why go to Paris when you can get dirty postcards on Fourteenth Street?"

Boyd told me how Edward Martyn had got back at George Moore for Moore's kidding of him in "Hail and Farewell." In the new Irish "Who's Who," Martyn has put down as his "Recreation: George Augustus Moore," using Moore's middle name, which Moore has tried so hard to hide and forget.



DOYLE, LODGE AND SPIRITUALISM

Monday, April 16.

I went down yesterday and tidied up my scrumptious new office, putting up pictures, filing away letters, arranging books on my desk, and getting the hang of giving the appropriate air of dignity and importance to my new

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background. And I was up early to-day in order to lose no time sitting at my faultless and capacious desk. Unfortunately that is all, so far, I have been able to do at the desk—sit at it, and when, with Don Marquis in tow, a group of us from the office went in search of a convenient and inexpensive eating place, I had accomplished no more than a dexterous and graceful slitting of envelopes with a pretty new letter-opener. The discussion at lunch had to do with the censorship, Conan Doyle, and God.

“Isn’t Doyle priceless?” asked Don, recalling the story in the morning papers wherein Doyle had confessed that the spirit photograph he had shown at his last lecture and which he said he believed to be authentic was a fake palmed off on him by a practical joker.

But the spectacle of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge going about the country unwittingly capitalizing their grief has an element of pathos in it. Both men were led into this thing, I think, by an intense operation of the will to believe through the loss of their much adored and only sons.

Sir Oliver is a scientist whose eminence in that field is beyond dispute; he has made enduring and important contributions to the slow progress of the human race; his name is a monument to the human intellect, and that monument will stand in spite of the opportunity he has offered and encouraged to the mundane and facetious to deface it with ridicule. And Sir Arthur has written fiction in “The White Company” and the Sherlock Holmes stories which will long give pleasure and entertainment to men. Remembering this, we should cloak with the wings of our charity the undignified spectacle which, under the force of a cruel irony, they are making of themselves. Even if it should turn out that there is something

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to justify their open credulity, it has, no less, its suspicion of bad taste and it is far from edifying.



THE SEMITIC ANTI-SEMITES

Tuesday, April 17.

Lela and Samuel Hoffenstein, Captain Achmed Abdullah, Dr. Henry K. Marks and Mr. Osborne came to the house to-night. Before the others arrived, Sam and I became engaged in an animated discussion of anti-Semitism. Sam is one of the few Jewish friends I have who is not an anti-Semite, and in consequence my argumentative artillery was lost upon him, but I discharged it just the same.

The Semitic anti-Semites usually point disparagingly to the rich Jews who built their fortunes on usury and dubious trade tricks, join country clubs, wear knickers, and ape Fifth Avenue social functions; but this is a course of conduct which is the rule with all races.

I gave Sam "The Maritime History of Massachusetts" to read, so that he would know something of the Boston Brahmins, whose aristocracy was founded on the very secure foundation of shanghai and murder.

Money and power are the first essentials of a functioning aristocracy and always have been; culture and manners, benignity, tolerance and enlightened self-interest come after, with the leisure for these matters. The feudal barons, the rum peddlers with clipper ships in Boston Harbor, and the slave dealers and exploiters of England and Virginia first made it possible, through questionable means, for their descendants to assume that they

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are the special guardians of light and culture and are God's vicars among the races of men.

There is every reason to believe that the most powerful and perhaps even the most beneficent aristocracy is being founded now among the Chosen People who have taken their share of the equal opportunities America affords. Men like Hilaire Belloc, it seems to me, are poor sports, without a historical sense or a sense of humor.



MORE ABOUT ELIOT

Wednesday, April 18.

John Gould Fletcher, the poet, who is over for a few weeks from London to arrange about the American publication of a new volume of poems and essays, came to see me to-day and brought news of Conrad Aiken, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and other Americans now residing in England or France.

Eliot, he said, has decided not to publish anything of his own for some time to come, because he feels that he has said all that he has to say for the present in "The Waste Land," which he regards as the culmination and synthesis of all his previous work.

"Eliot thinks that perhaps he carried erudition too far in 'The Waste Land,'" said Fletcher, "and he told me that the next poems he published would be simple and traditional in manner. 'The Waste Land' is his crowning achievement in the particular form and idiom he has perfected for himself; he is now, I think, turning his attention to the sonnet. Eliot has the finest intellect of any man I know. I don't think he feels very deeply or

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is capable of any profound emotional reactions, but his intellectual equipment is tremendous."

Eliot, by the way, in letters to *The Chicago Daily News* and *The New York Globe* has given the lie direct to all those who, a few months ago, were so indefatigable in spreading the report that they had "private and confidential information" from Eliot himself that "The Waste Land" was written as a hoax.



DREISER'S PROPER STORY

Friday, April 20.

To a gay luncheon to-day given by Arthur Vance, editor of the *Pictorial Review* and Otto Liveright, the authors' agent. The last time I saw Vance I was witness to an oral contract between him and Theodore Dreiser. Dreiser had just been occupied with rubbing salad dressing in Dr. Clifford Smythe's hair, when Arthur said, "I'll make you a proposition, Dreiser! If you will write a story that hasn't a prostitute or a kept woman in it, I promise to buy it and pay our top price for it." "You're on!" cried Dreiser, and we all shouted that we had heard the agreement. "Dreiser has made good," Vance told me to-day. "He came through with a corking story, with a real plot, humor and beauty in it. It did lack woman interest, but I bought it just the same and published it in *Pictorial Review* for January, 1925. The title of the story was 'Glory Be McGlathery.'"



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RASCOE'S PASSION FOR TRAP DRUMMING

Friday, April 27.

To a spirited party to-night at Charlie Brackett's, where Carl Van Vechten was illegally elected the handsomest man and the vote was contested by Tony de Sanchez. I told Dr. Smith Ely-Jelliffe about my ambition to become a trap drummer in a jazz orchestra and how I am always practicing with my sticks; and he said there was nothing psycho-analytically sinister about my case—just a harmless outlet of muscular eroticism and a satisfaction of a profound sense of rhythm. He encouraged me in it.



ON THE STATEN ISLAND FERRY

Monday, April 30.

Up at 6 and in haste to the Barge Office, from a nearby pier of which the revenue cutters leave, with customs officers and ship news reporters aboard, to visit the incoming steamships detained at Quarantine. The *Tuscania* was due, bringing Joseph Conrad. But the ship was a day late.

The air was crisp, the morning fresh and sunlit; and mists dappled the smoke of the Jersey shore and the black puffs from innumerable barges busy in the harbor.

I took the ferry to Staten Island and returned, drinking in the beauty which on such an early morning meets the eye at every point, with the exception, perhaps, of the Statue of Liberty, beautiful only in the green splotch which oxidation of the statue gives to the color harmony of the harbor.

On the ferry, around me, there was beauty, too—young

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women on their way to offices at 8, neat, trim, fresh, young, businesslike, no nonsense, yet feminine, lovely. Here a knowing child of Eve had sensed that a feathered touch of red would set off her olive skin; there another knew that the finest test of feminine character, personality and chic is in shoes and had chosen footgear in consonance with her costume, which all women, even the dullest, know how to select.

I wondered if these favored ferry passengers exulted daily as I did on this and other occasions in the morning approach to Manhattan Island, when the fog, which blurs the outlines of the skyscrapers and engulfs their bases, sets off a sort of fairy paradise with the unpromising materials of very prosaic and efficient upper floors of monuments to American business. But no, I concluded, all beauty, unhappily, wears thin with too frequent contact; we seek the continual slight novelty, and Elysium would be dull and uninspiring after a few thousand years. That is why they, those enviable daily ferry passengers, were content to peruse their morning papers, chat blithely among themselves and take no notice of what is, to a provincial or a first visitor to American shores, the most magnificent view conceivable in the world.

I must add, in humiliation, that while a moment ago I said this view is inspiring, the inspiration it provided me was inarticulate, and that it flowered in an idiotic second-hand rhapsody. That is, perhaps, the double curse of poetry and memory. Imagine, and pity me, that the best I could do on this occasion was to have run through my head this imbecile medley of lines from authentic poetry:

*A thing of beauty is a joy forever,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven*

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*Upon the place beneath. It maketh me
To lie down in green pastures. It restoreth
My soul. The price of wisdom
Is above rubies; but beauty draws us
By a single hair. In fog or fire,
By lake or moorish fen where houses thick
And sewers annoy the air, and lucent syrups
Tinct with cinnamon, fret the pygmy body to decay,
It is the resurrection and the life. . . .*

I ought to be arrested for that. Still, in extenuation I shall plead that I exulted and rejoiced and that I felt the gentle touch of Beauty, even if, poor clod that I am, I was left tongue-tied and stammering with the words of gone but happier poets in my head.

With leisure on my hands, again on shore, I went into the Aquarium and was plagued in contemplation of the designs of Nature, which made the toad fish so hideous (though palatable) and the moon fish so exquisitely lovely; the mud puppy so repulsive and the pickerel so pretty; the sea salamander so ugly and the sea horse so graceful and beautiful. A meditative experience in the Aquarium, like a meditative experience in the Lick Observatory, where myriads of greater worlds than ours are revealed to the eye, is enough to drive one mad.

Which reminds me that I think the astronomers who say that the sun is playing out, losing its heat, and that the world will, in time, be left bleak and desolate by the insufficient warmth the sun will give, are, in all probability, unduly apprehensive, even on their own report of things. For they tell us that now and then suns are discovered in the offing of the infinite with greater heat than our sun. Who knows but what these suns are God's reserve

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supply and that, at the proper time, He will draw upon them, even if His plans upset the calculations and blue prints of our astro-physical engineers? I have no anthropomorphic conception of theism and still . . . perhaps that is why I permit myself a certain but respectful skepticism about the very definite conclusions of our scientists.



MEETING JOSEPH CONRAD

Tuesday, May 1.

A lot of us were on hand at the revenue cutter dock this morning to go out to the *Tuscania*—Christopher Morley and Robert Littell, a chap from a Polish daily, and Mr. Duffus, the regular ship news reporters and photographers, officers in neat-fitting khaki and officers in uniforms of the navy. I had brought along a copy of "Lord Jim," my favorite among the Conrad novels, and Chris had pocketed "Mirrors of the Sea," in our hope of obtaining autographs.

"When he wrote 'Mirrors of the Sea,'" Chris told me, "Conrad was still struggling desperately with English. He always slipped up on 'shall' and 'will.' Here's a passage: 'The sea shall be calm to-night.' I love that. This is my favorite among Conrad's books." . . .

"But, Chris, I am the only writer in the world who observes the rules governing the use of 'shall' and 'will,' and in doing so I often sound abominably archaic. Professor Stuart P. Sherman, of the department of English grammar and rhetoric in the University of Illinois, makes me wince every now and then with some *gauche* and out-

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landish misuse of 'shall' and 'will' and 'should' and 'would.' You are so bad in that respect that I often turn over in my grave. I have almost given up reading you on account of this deplorable habit."

"That piece you had about 'West of the Water Tower,' by Harry Leon Wilson, was a fine piece of work," Chris rejoined with a friendly unobservance of the auctorial amenities.

"I am glad you read my section, Chris. Only a comparatively small proportion of the country's population does; and the rest don't know what they are missing."

"But don't you think Wilson Follett went a little too far when he said that Conrad was the 'loneliest man in the world'?"

"Perhaps, but you see Follett is an incorrigible romantic, like yourself; but then you read his piece, didn't you?—which is something."

"Here's a wireless from David Bone, skipper of the *Tuscania*: 'Come and meet Muirhead and Marlow.' I don't know whether it was an excess of caution, this referring to Conrad as Marlow, or a bit of facetiousness," said Morley.

"I've read 'Broken Stowage,' by David Bone. How about 'The Brassboulder'?"

"It's marvelous, better than 'Broken Stowage.' I'll tell how good it is: McFee said it ranks next to Dana's 'Two Years Before the Mast' among sea stories. Mack says that the keenest engineers say that 'The Brassboulder' is 98 per cent perfect in its use of technical terms, and that most engineers wouldn't notice the errors."

But the *Tuscania*, with her ugly exterior lines (and her beautiful interior, with etchings by Muirhead Bone and Frank Brangwyn in the corridors) loomed alongside

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and we boarded her. Trepidation seized me; I thought of the excruciating interrogations Conrad would have to go through—"What do you think of America?" before the poor man had even sighted America. "Do you think American women have big feet?" before the lonely, retired sea captain had ever seen an American woman on her native heath. "What do you think of the United States?" before the gentleman had even got a glimpse of the United States. . . . "Take that pose again!" from a dozen photographers. "And how do you spell your name, Mr. Connard? And what is your first name, please? Joseph? What are you famous for? Are you a novelist? What kind of novels do you write?" . . . "Say, bo, what's that egg's act—League of Nations or Suffering Armenians?" . . . "He's the famous novelist. Everybody has heard of him." . . . "They have, eh? Well, I've never heard of him. What kind of novels does he write—detective novels or highbrow stuff?"

On the bridge we paced, with the spires of Manhattan looming gorgeously through the mist in the morning sunlight, and Muirhead Bone, the etcher, trying desperately to catch in crayon the vision which met his eye, and with well-mannered apologies begging not to be interrupted: "This is a matter of life and death. You won't mind, now, will you? I can't come away now. You see, please, it's only a few minutes. You won't mind, will you?" and sketching away feverishly on an original which would bring \$5,000 on any open market. And Conrad reduced, with his extraordinary vocabulary, to the short and simple banals of the poor: "Magnificent!" "Lovely!" "Beautiful!"

We paced the captain's bridge. I sought an autograph for a 1922 edition of "Lord Jim," got it, and begged

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Captain Bone for an additional inscription. He reneged: "If it were my book, it would be a different matter"; and relented with: "Captain Joseph Conrad delivered in New York Harbor in good order and condition by David W. Bone, Master, R. M. S. *Tuscania*, May Day, 1923." . . . Pride, not without reflections, concerning the pecuniary benefit to my grandsons, to whom autograph collectors might quote, say, hundreds of dollars. . . . We newspapermen and critics are so improvident.

A shy, diffident, humble, modest, great old man shaking in his shoes after contact with importunate reporters and photographers, a creative artist whose words to the world are contained exclusively in his written expression and whose reactions, expressed verbally, are but little different from the ordinary sort: "Nice weather we are having; a pretty sight that; I had a touch of lumbago and gout coming over."

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P. G. Wodehouse came to see Mrs. Paterson and me this afternoon. He is a burly chap; looks like a football player, ruddy, clear-eyed, alert and enthusiastic; not at all like his "Piccadilly Jim," over whose "What ho! What ho!" and whose drawl I have laughed so heartily. Mr. Wodehouse has, during all these years, not yet got used to the noise of New York, and he can't write in the city. He is interested in Arthur Machen, delighting especially in those beautifully written autobiographical books, "Things Near and Far" and "Far Off Things"; H. G. Wells, he thinks, stepped on the chute after "Tono Bun-gay"; still, he would rank Wells with the very greatest of living novelists.



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CONRAD'S ARRIVAL: A FORMAL ACCOUNT

Wednesday, May 2.

Joseph Conrad, who shares with Thomas Hardy the distinction of being generally considered one of the two greatest of living English novelists, arrived in New York yesterday on his first visit to America. He made the trip over from Glasgow on the *Tuscania*, which is commanded by his friend, Captain David W. Bone, author of two books of the sea stories, "The Brassbounder" and "Broken Stowage."

During his stay here the author of "Youth," "Chance," "Victory" and "Lord Jim" will be the guest of F. N. Doubleday at Oyster Bay, L. I. He is not to make any public addresses or gather material for a book. The only wish he expressed yesterday concerning the disposition of his time was that of viewing New York and its environs from the top of the Woolworth Building. Another concrete ambition—that of seeing New York's skyline from the harbor—he realized yesterday morning while mists blurred the sharp outlines of the buildings and moved him to repeated and ecstatic exclamations such as "Magnificent!" "Lovely!" "Incredibly beautiful!" "Marvelous!"

In this æsthetic opinion he had the concurrence of another distinguished artist aboard the *Tuscania*, Muirhead Bone, the etcher, and brother of Captain Bone. "John Masefield once told me that there is no more magnificent sight in the world than the view of Lower Manhattan from an incoming steamship," said Mr. Bone, as in feverish

(NOTE: The following piece originally appeared on page one of *The Herald-Tribune* and is reprinted here both for its intrinsic value and because it brought forth tributes from a number of old-time newspaper men who considered it to be in the finest tradition of American reporting.—C. H. G.)

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haste he sought to catch in crayon what met his eyes from the bridge. "And though I have not seen all the sights in the world, I can well believe it."

The newspaper men who clambered aboard the *Tuscania* at Quarantine found the novelist in the captain's quarters. He was attired in a stiff bosomed shirt and a high collar without wings, dark four-in-hand tie, a suit of brown cheviot, brown woolen hose, low black shoes with square toes, black overcoat and a derby. He is five feet eight inches in height; he has a gray mustache and a closely cropped white beard, trimmed to a point; his hair and eyebrows are coal black, except for a sprinkling of gray above slightly satyric ears; his eyes are brown, almost to a beady black, and they look out from lids perpetually narrowed, from the corners of which radiate innumerable lines; the red tracings of veins show faintly upon his weatherbeaten face; his forehead is rather low and receding; his head is broad above the temples and shaped like an interrogation point in the back. He wears a monocle. He enunciates words largely through movements of his lips and he has the trace of a foreign accent, with a tendency to put the stress on the last syllable, as in emphasizing "plate" in "contemplate."

He has the appearance of a man of the most delicate sensibilities, shy, sensitive, modest, even humble and apprehensive in the presence of strangers. And that is what he is. He was visibly frightened by the approach of his interviewers; his hands and lips trembled and his mouth expanded in a nervous smile.

The interviewers delegated Christopher Morley, who is a friend of Captain Bone and whom Conrad had known through correspondence and literary connections, to establish a personal contact; and Morley did it admirably, by

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slowly and gently setting the great man at his ease, turning his mind to recollections of his days at sea and assuring him that he had admirers, even worshipers, among American readers.

So reticent, diffident and without consciousness of his greatness is Conrad that your interviewer had not the courage or the effrontery to ask him to expand the philosophy of life, the acute observations, which are scattered throughout his work.

"Are not our lives too short for that full utterance which, through all our stammering, is, of course, our only and abiding intention? I have given up expecting those last words, whose ring, if they could only be pronounced, would shake both heaven and earth. There is never any time to say our last word—the last word of our love, of our desire, faith, revolt."—"LORD JIM."

"A woman may be a fool, a sleepy fool, an agitated fool, a too awfully noxious fool, and she may even be simply stupid. But she is never dense. She is never made of wood through and through, as some men are. . . . And that is why so many men are afraid of them."—

"It is my belief that no man ever understands quite his own artful dodges to escape from the grim shadow of self-knowledge."—"LORD JIM."

"But the artist appeals to that part of our being which is not dependent on wisdom; to that in us which is a gift and not an acquisition—and, therefore, more permanently enduring. He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity, of beauty and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—and to the subtle, but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts; to the solidarity in

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dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other."—PREFACE TO "THE NIGGER OF THE NARCISSUS."

While light talk and reminiscences came from the novelist, that wisdom imbedded in his work, which is all the more ingratiating for being cast in a mellow dubiety instead of in the form of final pronouncements, ran through your interviewer's mind, but he dared not ask and heard only:

"I had a touch of lumbago and an attack of gout in my left hand; I didn't get up in the bridge as much as I should have liked. . . . This is the largest ship I was ever on (the displacement of the *Tuscania* is 16,892 tons). . . . I left the sea in '04. Ships have changed since then. All life has changed. Captain Bone was kind enough to show me all the new contraptions which ships did not have when I was at sea.

"Yes, I still hold my master's ticket; it's in the family archives. Captain Bone insisted that his men address me by my title. At first I didn't know whom they meant when the officers said, 'Do this or that for the captain.' It pleased me very much. A pretty compliment. . . . Yes, Walter Hines Page was a great man. It is part of England's traditional luck to have had Page in London during the war. He was killed by the war just as much as if he had had a bullet in his heart.

"America has always been good to me; magazines have serialized my stories from the very first. . . . Americans have an enviable enthusiasm. Enthusiasm makes life interesting. . . . No, I'm not much up on modern American literature. You see, I don't read much fiction and my mind is not critical. I couldn't say much about writers because I haven't got any general culture. Twenty

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years at sea when one is a youth do not fit one with a critical type of mind. I'm not a literary man.

"Henry James, who used to come to see me, told me about John Burroughs, the fellow who was always chasing nightingales. . . . I read Poe in French translations. Whitman, yes, but I can't say about Whitman, for I haven't a critical mind. You see, I have had three lives; until 17 a boy in Poland, twenty years at sea and the remainder as a writer. I thought of drifting back to sea, even after I was married; but after 'The Nigger of the Narcissus' I made up my mind it was the end of my sea life."

The questions drummed, but did not become articulate:

"I call a woman sincere when she volunteers a statement resembling remotely in form what she really would like to say, what she really thinks ought to be said if it were not for the necessity to square the stupid sensitiveness of men. The women's rougher, simpler, more upright judgment embraces the whole truth, which their tact, their mistrust of masculine idealism, ever prevents them from speaking in its entirety. And their tact is unerring. We could not stand women speaking the truth. It would cause infinite misery and bring about the most awful disturbances in this rather mediocre but still idealistic fool's paradise in which each of us lives his own little life—the unit in the great sum of existence. And they know it. They are merciful."—"CHANCE."

"Being a woman is a terribly difficult trade, since it consists principally in dealings with men."—"CHANCE."

"The sincerest of women will make no unnecessary confidence to a man. And this is as it should be."—"CHANCE."

"That streak of white, that cavern separating the build-

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ings," said Captain Bone to Captain Conrad, pointing toward the spires of Manhattan, "is Broadway. We steer by it. It makes the deep channel. When we no longer see it we know we are off the deep channel course."

"But I can't say which one of my books is my favorite," said Conrad to an interviewer. "One day it is one book, another day another. Like my two sons—the eldest is the eldest and the youngest is the youngest. They have entirely different points of interest."

"It is respectable to have no illusions—and safe—and profitable—and dull. Yet you, too, in your time must have known the intensity of life, that light of glamour created in the shock of trifles, as amazing as the glow of sparks struck from a cold stone—and as short lived, alas!"—**"LORD JIM."**

"We pass through periods dominated by this or that word—it may be development, or it may be competition, or education, or purity, or efficiency, or even sanctity. It is the word of the time. Well, just then it was the word Thrift which was out in the streets walking arm in arm with righteousness, the inseparable companion and backed up of all national catchwords, looking everybody in the eye, as it were."—**"CHANCE."**

"I don't think, Chris, he is so much a pessimist as people make out, do you? Anyhow he is a charming, lovable, gentle soul."

"We wander in our thousands over the face of the earth, the illustrious and the obscure, earning beyond the seas our fame, or money, or only a crust of bread; but it seems to me that for each of us going home must be like going to render an account. We return to face our superiors, our kindred, our friends—those whom we obey, and those whom we love; but even those who have neither,

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the most free, lonely, irresponsible and bereft of ties—even those for whom home holds no dear face, no familiar voice—even they have to meet the spirit which dwells in the land, under its sky, in its air, in its valleys, and on its rises, in its fields, in its waters, and its trees—a mute friend, judge and inspirer. Say what you like, to get its joy, to breathe its peace, to face its truth, one must return with a clear conscience.”—“LORD JIM.”

“But, no, I am not a man of wisdom, a philosopher,” Conrad was saying to your interviewer; “I am a creative artist. Aphorisms, sayings culled from their context, in my novels, words which are an integral part of the creation—to label these sayings wisdom is too aggressive. I am not a wise man.”

“I tell you he’s a prince, a real man,” one press photographer observed. “Modest, not lording it over anybody, not putting on airs. I liked what he said about not being a literary man and not reading any fiction. I don’t read any fiction myself. Haven’t time except now and then when I pick up the real stuff, the classics. I tell you, all the big ones are like him—no side to him, gentle, shy, modest.”

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MR. A. H. WOODS

Met an amusing and interesting fellow this morning, A. H. Woods, the chap who produces plays to earn himself leisure for writing letters to dramatic critics. He sat at a broad desk piled high with the scripts of hopeful playsmiths, in a hospitable office wherein, to my surprise, I descried no bed.

“What will you have—a cigar, a chew of tobacco, a nip of Scotch, a cigarette, a shot in the arm or a sniff of

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coke?" and when I had indicated my bourgeois and unambitious pleasure, an inscrutable valet, attired in native costume, entered silently on padded feet and offered me a tray of every conceivable blend of cigarette, from Virginia burley with perique to Egyptian maidenhair, cured especially for the khedive. "How's my friend, Percy Hammond?" my host asked. "Perce knew me when I was poor."

But it was easy to see that now, as Mr. Hammond would say, Mr. Woods is otherwise. He told me of his encounter with Bernard Shaw, to whom he offered a cigar, which Shaw took. Shaw must have been as concentrated in his interest in Mr. Woods as was Mr. Woods in Shaw, for, though Shaw loathes tobacco, he stuck the cigar in his pocket.

"Shaw is the most intelligent man in the world," said Mr. Woods. "When you are with that guy you never need a drink; you get drunk looking at him, his eyes sparkle so and he is so keenly alive. I wanted to get the motion picture rights to all of his plays, but he thought screen versions of his plays would interfere with his repertory companies. I tried to show him where he was wrong about that, but he couldn't see it. . . . In London I took the King to see 'Potash and Perlmutter.' The London theaters are dusted once in twenty years. There is a plush covered steel railing around the royal box with dust on it a foot thick, and the King got to laughing so hard he kept falling against the rail. When he left his shirt front was striped like a zebra."

Mr. Woods said he had just been rereading "Man and Superman" with a view of reviving it; but had found it a little slow for the times and rather antiquated. He was enthusiastic about a play about Casanova, which Sidney

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Howard has adapted from the Spanish and which Lowell Sherman will star in next season. I was fascinated by a life-sized statue of a happy-go-lucky, gorgeously attired negro in a corner. "I picked that up in Paris. I admired Bert Williams so much I tried for twenty years to get him to sign up with me, and when I couldn't get Bert I bought this mascot. I finally got Bert, and in less than a year he up and died on me. If I seem to see a pleased expression on that mascot's face I take a play; if he frowns, I pass it up."

The chair in which I had been sitting suddenly became a swinging basket which lifted me up and wafted me to the elevator, which was waiting. "Aleck Woollcott is ill," I heard him saying into his European receiver; "send him some flowers with my compliments and my best wishes for his speedy recovery," and added after he had hung up, "Maybe when he gets out he will remember to give me a nice roast."

(NOTE: "Aleck" (Alexander) Woollcott was at that time the critic of the drama for the *New York Times*.—C. H. G.)



MORLEY, CONRAD AND THE INTERVIEWERS

Monday, May 7.

Christopher Morley is still beefing because we ship news reporters had the appalling irreverence to ask Joseph Conrad questions and because the photographers were so disrespectful of Morley's god as to ask him to pose for his picture. As one of the ship news reporters—if only for one day, through the kindly offices of Mr. Petrie, *The Tribune's* ship news reporter—I would add my mite of resentment to Morley's aspersions.

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When, by the way, is Morley going to write his story of the arrival of Joseph Conrad? After all, he is, like the rest of us, working for a daily newspaper. Twenty-four hours after the *Tuscania* had docked the best he could manage was a paragraph announcing that he was so overcome by meeting Conrad face to face that he wouldn't be able to write anything for the present. And he hasn't come through yet.

I wonder what Dwight Perrin, my city editor, would have said if, instead of trying out a story of sorts, I had told him that the experience of meeting Conrad was so overwhelming that I had to go to bed and wouldn't be able to do the story. I can't imagine what his exact words would be, and I should not be able to report them here if I could, but their general drift would include the observation that I was a rotten reporter and hereafter my services in his department would no longer be required.

Contrary to Morley's ill-tempered report, my own observation on this now historic occasion was that we reporters and photographers not only treated Conrad with the utmost respect but we showed Morley a courtesy which, it would now appear, he hardly deserved.

Morley knew Captain Bone and he had corresponded with Conrad; Conrad, who is shy and modest, was visibly frightened by the interviews; Mr. Cunningham of *The Evening World* suggested that we keep quiet and let Morley put the questions. While the great man was getting his bearings and entering into a calm and affable relationship with us, every reporter stood back, hat in hand, humble and respectful, while Morley asked questions whose answers could not possibly have the slightest news value.

During that half hour of questioning so respectful and

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sympathetic toward Conrad were the reporters that not one of us had the impertinence to ask a pertinent question. If we reporters had been bad mannered we might have got some stuff which would have made a good story. Instead we were, one and all, hard put to get a "lead" for our copy.

As for the photographers, they were working under difficulties. They are employed to take photographs, which demand sunlight; they were given only a few minutes and they had to work in haste; they were excited and anxious and therefore, perhaps, a little gruff. But it was not Conrad, it was Morley who was offended when one of them requested Conrad to take off his hat. Had the photographers been really bad mannered they would have told Morley that only by courtesy was he managing the show; and they would have shown him where he got off when he said to them while they were taking snaps of Conrad, "I'll give you just thirty seconds more!" It would hardly have excused them, if they had reported back to their employers that they hadn't been able to take any pictures of Conrad because Christopher Morley wouldn't let them. "Whothell is Christopher Morley?" they would have been asked, and, quite properly, they would have got the gate when they answered: "He's a newspaper man."



KEITH PRESTON ON THE CONRAD TEMPEST

Friday, May 18.

Keith Preston, who scans the horizon with his periscope in *The Chicago Daily News* seems to hit the head on the nail with:

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THE NEW ST. CHRISTOPHER

*When Cap. Conrad reached Manhattan feeling just a
little porely
Who should meet him still on shipboard but the modest
Mr. Morley
Saying, "Lord! behold your servant! your devoted major
domo,
Who has served since first he saw you in the pages of
"Nostromo";
I will save you, I will shield you from the pestilent
reporters;
I will keep the picture chasers from advancing to close
quarters;
None shall ask you idle questions on the cook book of ye
missus.
You shall give your servant light on ye dark man of ye
Narcissus.*

*So he banned the yapping news hounds, did devoted Mas-
ter Morley.
And the pack has turned upon him! Yea, they bark and
bite him sorely.
But we honor and salute him and exalt him on our shelf,
For scarce St. Christopher the first took more upon
himself.*



WHAT ERNEST BOYD TALKS ABOUT

Friday, May 25.

To a party to-night at Isa Glenn's where Carl Van Vechten talked about Gertrude Stein, T. R. Smith about children and motherhood, and Ernest Boyd about . . .

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well, what do you think this foremost authority on Irish literature, this cosmopolite who speaks a dozen languages and knows a dozen literatures, talks about in his off moments? The imperative biological and ethical necessity of strict monogamy! All the time! I'm getting tired of hearing it.

Home with Bernadine and Otto Liveright in a taxi, and to bed, where I read until I dozed off "Doctor Heraclius Gloss," a newly translated edition of one of Guy de Maupassant's earliest (but mature) literary efforts, with an excellent introduction by Ernest Boyd. This novel, as Boyd points out, was written when Maupassant was still under the influence of the tradition which produced those amiable ironists, scoffers and satirists, Montaigne, Voltaire, Renan and Anatole France. "Dr. Heraclius Gloss" is of the company of "Candide" and "The Opinions of the Abbé Jerome Coignard," with an eccentric bibliophile as the central figure about whom the author weaves his joking but pertinent comments upon errors and stupidities of mankind.



HOW CONRAD KEPT WELL INFORMED

Sunday, June 10.

I had been wondering how it was possible for Joseph Conrad, who lives in an inland hamlet, to keep in such close touch with the world of affairs; how it was that he seemed to know everything that is going on—so different from most novelists, who are concerned only with themselves and their work, and rarely bother to read anything; but Thomas Beer told me the other day about

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Conrad's scheme. Conrad has a clipping bureau which sends him, not items about himself or reviews or criticisms, but cuttings of news which may interest him. These are delivered to him in the mails each morning; and he doesn't have to bother to go through the papers reading interminable columns of stuff for something that awakes his interest; but gives him the news, in which he might reasonably be interested, in convenient form.



THE CATSKILLS CONFIRM DE GOURMONT

Friday, June 22.

Up early this morning to catch the boat to Kingston Point, and thence by rail and motor to an inn nestling 2,200 feet up in the Catskills, to visit Hazel.

Saturday, June 23.

After breakfast Hazel and I started on a hike to the top of Overlook Mountain. Halfway up I didn't think I could make it, but of a sudden I got my second wind and reached the highest peak, feeling entirely free of fatigue. On the side of a huge boulder resting on the edge of a precipice with a sheer drop of several hundred feet there is a chiseled record that one J. Coutant had watched the view from this rock in 1865, again in 1879 and again in 1881. The earliest date I could find among the half obliterated engravings was 1853. . . . Miles below me was the village of Woodstock, and the Ashokan Reservoir partly obscured by an intermediate cloud; to the left in the distance the Hudson, and to the

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right the Sugar Loaf, Indian Head and Twin Mountains.

I recalled while standing there that Remy de Gourmont had once described Nietzsche's philosophy as a product of the mountains as opposed to the philosophy of cities, plains and valleys. I thought when I read that statement in "Promenades Philosophiques" that it was preposterous rhetoric, but now I am not so sure. A prospect from a mountain, which dwarfs man and his achievements to insignificance, is likely to be either frightening or exhilarating, to breed a somber mysticism or a grandiose and virile optimism.



MENCKEN, SHAW, MR. DOOLEY AND MONTAGUE GLASS

Thursday, July 5.

Throughout the afternoon I sweltered over the type forms, making up the section, and went to Sam Hoffenstein's in the evening. Ernest Boyd was there and he told how he and H. L. Mencken and Philip Goodman had been drawn accidentally into a blow-out of the Elks in some New Jersey town and how Mencken had been so entertained by the jollification he had considered applying for membership. He also gave an amusing account of a session in Baltimore with Mencken and Archibald Henderson, Shaw's biographer. Henderson, it appears, proposed to write a new book on Shaw and another one on Ibsen and wanted to know if the books would sell, but they discouraged him vastly with flat statements to the effect that Shaw is as out of date as a velocipede and that no one reads Ibsen any more except William Archer.

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Sam and I were discussing American humor and satire when I voiced the heresy I have long kept smothered—namely, that George Ade is greatly overrated. For myself I have found George Ade almost unreadable. His slang has never appealed to me as spontaneous or indigenous, but manufactured and evanescent. His satire has been for the most part conventional and directed against too obvious things, like the japes of a college weekly. Finley Peter Dunne, and Montague Glass, on the other hand, I think, are men of rare genius, Dunne as a satirist and Glass as a literary caricaturist. Had Dunne been at the height of his power during the post-armistice events we should have had from him, I believe, a running, joshing commentary equal in intelligent penetration to the marvelous “*Histoire Contemporaine*,” by Anatole France. Glass’s ability to reveal human character in exaggerated outline is comparable to that of Dickens or Gogol. And both men have an artistic sense of dialect and of colloquialism which gave their literary performance a fresh, firm and natural beauty. They have style.



STENDHAL, NIETZSCHE AND ANATOLE FRANCE

Friday, July 13.

Notes for an essay on Henry Beyle (De Stendhal):

It is almost enough to say in behalf of Henry Beyle (De Stendhal) that Frederick Nietzsche and Anatole France are greatly in his debt. This, you will admit, is a vast range of credit and it says much for the cerebral solvency of the man who sustains it. No minds could well be more dissimilar than that of Nietzsche, with his

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gospel of hardness, and that of France, with his gospel of pity. Yet they owe much to Stendhal, whose influence upon them is so curious that it may be felicitous to explain it.

It can best be made clear, I think, by our seeing at once that Nietzsche was a poet and that France is a thinker. I know that it is usually understood to be the other way around. But a man is not a poet because he writes verses and calls himself a dreamer, and a man is not a thinker because he writes prose and calls himself a philosopher.

Nietzsche's work has, in the main, or is designed to have, the effect of a stimulant. It intoxicates; and intoxicants have a therapeutic value. It exalts the reader above and beyond the limitations of life. The Nietzschean message reduced to a word is the exhortation, "Courage!" And exhortations come always with heightened emotions, which, in turn, are, in essence, poetic. Nietzsche's work is "inspirational." Its aim is to strengthen the will and to give resolution to the weak and diffident. But it is not to be regarded seriously by every Tom, Dick and Harry. One must not be too hasty in putting his precepts into practice. The police are just around the corner. You see, "The Will to Power" and "Thus Spake Zarathustra" are beautiful and effectual poems which a shy, timid and ailing man made in his solitude and impotence as a solace to himself. To some it is a philosophy of life, but so to others is "Endymion," and the exquisite songs the shepherd known as David made against the monotony of the grazing plains have stood for centuries as guides to conduct and as prophetic guaranties of the intercession of a Redeemer and as a promise of a future life.

Anatole France, on the other hand, is in his work

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prosaic. From him you will derive no ecstasy unless it be from the sheer charm of his sentence structure. He accepts life with a shrug of resignation and with a serene and benevolent smile at its unheroic and futile aspect. He does not psalmodize the superman, because he has seen with humane and earthy eyes the supermen of the past and has known them for vain and pretentious fellows whose hollow vanity was a constant menace to the life and happiness of their creatures. France observes life with a clear and steady eye, and because life amuses him in its myriad imperfections he has no impulse to recreate it in fancy nearer to his heart's desire. He knows, too, that such an impulse is useless and that no ideal or preachment is proof against the prevailing, changeless norm of weakness and stupidity. His mental processes are as precise and logical as the demonstration of a theorem in mathematics. And that is what thinking is—deduction in the mathematics of fact and experience. All the rest is metaphysics. Yes, France is a thinker.

Now that we have allowed this distinction let me urge another anomaly, which is that Stendhal was a source of ideas to Nietzsche and that to France he offered suggestions for a style. To account for this we must realize that men seek in others that which is most like themselves. To do this is a requisite of growth and a method of reassurance. There is no grafting on of alien virtues in the ordinary process of nature. Character does not change; it is essentially unvariable from the cradle to the grave, and in the progress from the one to the other we draw from our similars, in so far as we may, the nourishment adapted to our essential selves. That is why Baudelaire could in honesty say in refutation of the

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charge of plagiarism that he was attracted to Poe because they were so much alike.

Well, Stendhal was a Nietzsche who had been around a bit more than the philologist of Basel. But Stendhal, too, was a mild and timid man whose dream it was to be an amalgam of Napoleon and Don Juan. Had he been even more ineffectual and of a more studious bent he might have written a "Beyond God and Evil" years before Nietzsche lived. As it was, he compiled a handbook of amour from data pillaged here and there without the courtesy of credit, and in Julien Sorel of "Le Rouge et Le Noir" he depicted for perhaps the first time in fiction the Nietzschean superman in his avatar as a capricious subjugator of the hearts of women.

This Julien must have warmed the cockles of Nietzsche's bosom. Here was an ideal projection of the sort of fascinating and ruthless cavalier that both Stendhal and Nietzsche would have liked to be. He was a cynic and an immoralist, seeking in carnal derring-do the momentary satisfaction of an inquisitive and expeditious spirit. He typified a man of will in whom sentiment was an order of words, a series of sighs and a formula of gestures in the tactics of amorous campaign. Julien was a calculating Napoleon of the boudoir, a Cæsar of the alcove, a Hannibal audaciously scaling the trellis and the balcony.



STANISLAWS SZUKALSKI

Friday, August 10.

The book of reproductions from half-tone and four color plates of the drawings and sculpture of Stanislaws

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Szukalski came in to-day from the Chicago publishing house of Covici-McGee. Szukalski is a young Polish sculptor—twenty-seven years old—who is, I am convinced, the most extraordinary genius now using clay as his principle medium of expression. I know that statement sounds extravagant, but I am prepared to defend it and to rest my case with the verdict of time. I have rarely felt so sure of anything as I am in my conviction that in comparison with Szukalski such sculptors as Maillol, Brancusi, Epstein, Mestrovic and Bourdelle, capable and talented as they may be, are uninspired, deficient in creative vitality, narrow visioned and inexperienced in sheer craftsmanship.

This conviction is based upon a burning belief in Szukalski's potentialities, discernible in his work to date, which is, admittedly, that of a man who has not entirely found himself and whose powers have not reached full maturity. Szukalski himself says that all he has hitherto done is only so much apprentice work. But what apprentice work! He has shown them all—Brancusi, Mestrovic, Epstein, the Cubists, Vorticists, Impressionists and Expressionists—that he can do their tricks better than they can do them themselves.

Compare for instance, the rear view of Szukalski's "Hopi Indian" with any one of Brancusi's treatment of ovals. You will find that Szukalski has attained what Brancusi is after, and used it merely as a detail in a sculptural composition that has at once strength and serenity—and it is not an abstraction but a well-modeled representation of a human head. Turn again to the "Portrait of Van Den Berghen" and see how much more inevitable and assured is Szukalski's handling of planes than that of any of the professed Cubists. Among those

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sculptors who are striving for mere abstract design has any one of them equaled the piece Szukalski has labeled "Doctcritic Word"? Among those drawings which Szukalski made when he was learning all the technical secrets he could from the great masters there are some excellent recreations of the spirit—for they are not imitations—of Blake, Goya, Callot, Cranach, Holbein, Beardsley, Rops and the modern masters of black and white.

Szukalski has done work in every genre with knife, burin, chisel and clay paddle; he has engraved beautiful medallions no larger than one's finger nail on bits of ivory, ebony, onyx and agate; he has modeled plaques and bas-reliefs and has designed groups of heroic size on the detail of which he has worked as carefully and as minutely as on his smallest and most delicate carvings. His drawings in color are usually made with oils on paper and cardboard, and so skillful is his brush work that his surfaces have the unbroken, smooth texture of a Holbein flesh tint.

He works without models, for he has trained himself to see and to retain in his memory what he sees. The use of models he says, is as great a weakness in a sculptor or a painter as the use of notes by an orator. "It is as if a poet who is about to write a sonnet describing his mistress's beauty should ask her to sit across from his desk while he looked up the words in the dictionary to describe what she looks like."

I have never seen any one who gave me so profound an impression of possessing a happy combination of genius and talent. When I have been with him I have been reminded always of Leonardo da Vinci; for Leonardo, too, in his youth was preoccupied with the grotesque; he, too, like Szukalski, experimented in mechanics, and

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studied physiology, anatomy and physics with the keen interest of a scientist; he, too, like Szukalski rigidly disciplined himself and devoted himself to his art to the exclusion of most other human interests.

Szukalski's hands are vibrant with controlled energy. With those hands I have seen him make a sketch in a few seconds, in which every line would be firm, sure, perfect. He is short in height, but has the shoulders and biceps of a blacksmith. His head is large; his neck short; his features curiously feminine. He wears his hair long; he effects corduroy trousers, held in place by a leather belt five or six inches in width and he carries a heavy walking stick on which he has carved strange designs.

He is almost entirely unread; he speaks a quaint English, suppressing all the articles and most of the prepositions and conjunctions, and yet his prose compositions are marvels in imagery and cadence, and his conversation is a continual surprise and delight. He has almost a clairvoyant faculty for summing up people's motives, surroundings, traits of character, limitations and abilities. I have heard him characterize poets and novelists and their work (which I knew he had not read) in epigrams so accurate as to be startling.

Like Joseph Conrad, another Pole, Szukalski's written English is quite different from his spoken English. Here is a sample of it from this book, a sample which reveals an instinct for prose rhythm of nobility and dignity:

To all you undeniable elders, insistent dwellers on dignity, I bow with consideration and hold back my impudent eye from winking.

I apologize for my youth and its obstinate self-obedience.

You once, in the moment of pious modesty, enlightened

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my views that these will change with years, that ripe age riper wisdom brings. That age teaches us to modify all views with broadminded fluency.

This foretelling explanation appeals to my knowledge hunger, for although I agree with you, still I conveniently come to such a conclusion that were I fat my belly would convulse with laughter.

And this is: if you, oh, reverent elders! are wisest at your hundredth year, then if some malicious god, to please me, gave you another hundred years on top, your mind would become still more fluid in its broadness and your staunch beliefs more liquid.

There are political conceits and philosophical reflections in this book, all couched in a form of similar beauty.

There is in Szukalski a directness and honesty of speech, a candor which is disconcerting to many people, habituated as they are to the nice and primping hypocrisies we call the social amenities. He prefers to have people say what they think about his work to having them pay what to him are stupid and graceless compliments. His work is, to many people, on their first contact with it disturbing or repulsive. Some of his pieces produce the effect of the charred remains of a corpse after a fire; other pieces are twisted and agonized in conception and execution and they exacerbate the nerves of some people who behold them. These people sometimes make the mistake of using the inexact and flattering adjective to describe their impression of these pieces. Szukalski has observed their faces, and known their real reactions before they have said a word. When they try to flatter him with words, that the expressions on their faces have belied, he is irritated. He is as likely as not to say something frank and candid about their intellectual honesty which makes them hate him. He has made many enemies in this

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fashion, even among people who have been cognizant and appreciative of his genius and have tried to help him.



FAVORITE WORDS OF AUTHORS

Sunday, August 19.

Something prompted me while I was reading Arthur Ponsonby's book on "English Diaries" to-night to recall that when I was keeping a journal back in 1910 I had already observed that nearly every writer has a special favorite among unusual words, which he keeps using over and over again. These words, curiously enough, are in some way, or seem to be, wrapped up in the man's character himself and express that character.

I don't want to bother to look up that journal entry now, but I remember some of these characteristic words. Shelley's favorite word was "mutability"; Emerson's was "intellection"; Victor Hugo's was "l'abîme," and so on. These words do seem to touch off these men, for Shelley was preoccupied with the mutability of human affairs, and mutability was a phrase of his own temperament; intellection was about all that Emerson had; and Hugo, with his oracular pseudo-profundity and ringing antitheses, was always alternating between the abyss and the stars, and he gazed probably too long into the abyss.

I recall, too, that nearly all of my acquaintances have words or phrases which recur in their conversation and serve to identify them. Here are some of them:

Don Marquis—"As a matter of fact"—

Edmund Wilson—"So it is!" and "Look here!" and "Notatall!"

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Thomas Beer—"Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera."

James Branch Cabell—"Well, I don't know now!"

Joseph Hergesheimer—"Utterly charming!"

George Jean Nathan—"Nah! Nah! Nooooooooo!"

(The former negative enunciated without any movement of the lips and the latter with lips puckered, as though he were about to kiss his maiden aunt.)

Samuel Hoffenstein—"Right you are!"

Carl Van Vechten—"I never saw anything like it in my life!"

Ernest Boyd—"Bloody nonsense!" (Agitato.)

H. L. Mencken—"A noble swine!" (with lofty contempt).

Ben Hecht—"Wonderful!" "Diminuendo!" "Stupid!"

Carl Sandburg—"It's a pity that"—

Sherwood Anderson—"Take it all in all"—

My Own—"The whole point is this"—



JEWISH AND GREEK IRONY

Saturday, August 25.

Alexander Woollocott, who has grown a little splotch of hair beneath his lower lip in the fashion of Robert Louis Stevenson, said that he and Robert Nathan had a new designation for me—the "Rapid Rascoe"—because I seem always to be in a rush. Bob had just read my article in the *Menorah Journal* on the "Judaic Strain in Modern Literature" and said he thought I sustained my point, especially in reference to the difference between Jewish and Greek irony.

"The Jew," I wrote, "does not observe the Hellenic

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maxim of measure in all things. He is an extremist ; and he is never more obviously the extremist than when he is apparently holding to the golden mean. When a Jew wishes to give an effect of indifference, of wise tolerance, of philosophic calm, he calls irony to his aid. But it is necessary to differentiate between Greek and Jewish irony. Jewish irony has an element of sarcasm and bitterness which Greek irony in its truest form does not possess. Jewish irony came into Greek literature with Lucian, who was a Jew ; but the irony of the dramatists, Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and of the Greek poets down to the Periclean age, was of another sort. The difference between Lucian (who wrote in Greek) and the Greeks before him lies in the difference between the Greek and the Jewish attitudes toward the external world : in other words, in the difference between their religious concepts. The Greeks held the gods responsible for the destiny of man, and if a man's fate was adverse, it was not through his own missteps but because the gods willed it so. Man attained heroic stature when he gave battle to the gods, when he strove valiantly against his fate ; and in Greek drama, when the gods triumphed, the tragic irony is great in proportion to the hero's pluck and zest in the life vouchsafed until the Parcæ are done with him. The Jews, on the other hand, held (and it is part of my thesis that they still hold) man responsible for his acts : the Jewish God was a jealous God, an inexorable God, who punished man for his sins. The Greek gods were a capricious and whimsical lot, with a great deal of humor and *savoir-faire*. The Jewish God, though He made man in His image, was after all a Very Superior Being, whose ways were inscrutable and whose actions took on none of the petty aspects of weak and lusty

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human beings. Zeus did not mind being ridiculous even in his amours; but it is inconceivable that the Jewish God could ever be ridiculous in anything. . . . Wit is characteristic of the Jews, but not humor. There is wit in the Old Testament and wit is one of the outstanding qualities of Jewish genius, but there is no humor in the Old Testament and I do not recall a single Jewish writer who possesses it. There again we have another outcome of the religious attitude; there again is a trait, the direct consequence of an attitude toward man and God, and essentially egocentric and individualistic attitude. Wit is the intellect's comic substitute for humor; but wit is tinged with malice while humor is all sympathy and compassion. The Jew is too individualistic to be either sympathetic or compassionate; his God early put him on his own and left it up to him to make good in the world; his God gave him transcendent ideals regarding right and wrong and enjoined him to obey ten commandments and thirty thousand other laws. The non-Jews with less exigent gods, failing to appreciate this personal responsibility exacted by the Jewish God, sharpened it by resenting it: anti-Semitism in its simplest form is merely the non-Jews' easy-going indifference to matters which seem to the Jew of tremendous moment. . . . The Jew is never serene, nor, on the other hand, is he ever complacent; coming of a race of prophets and malcontents he is always either portentous or in revolt. He is either excessively humble or full of arrogance, depressed or exalted, challenging the social order or patiently awaiting the coming of the Messiah. He never takes things easy or lets well enough alone; his bent is ethical: he cannot forbear to interfere with other people's affairs; he judges the world in relation to himself, his own peculiar problems and

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idiosyncrasies of taste; he has, in short, bad manners as the Greeks would have defined the term. Alcibiades was the Greek ideal of the good and gracious man, because it was said of Alcibiades that he made himself one with whatever company he encountered; he was martial among military men, scholarly among scholars; he ate and dressed like the barbarians when he was with them, and he accommodated his preferences in all matters to the situation in which he found himself. It is unthinkable that a Jewish Jew could ever be an Alcibiades; he is too jealous of his personal identity for that, too insistently egoistic, too readily contemptuous of modes of living he thinks inferior to his own." That is the rationale upon which I based my observations about the Judaic strain, which, I think, for good or ill, strongly colors the complexion of modern literature.



GOSSIP ABOUT MACHEN AND FIRBANK

Wednesday, August 29.

Hunter Stagg came to see me this afternoon and told me of his summer in Europe. While he was in England he saw Arthur Machen and Ronald Firbank. Machen, he said, is a more interesting person than one would suspect from his books; he is gracious, hospitable and a charming conversationalist. "I went to see him several times," said Stagg. "He serves a most potent drink, made of gin and sauterne, and at first I drank too rapidly and left his house in a very unstable condition. But later on I learned not to drink so fast. Machen's favorite book, he told me, was Harry Leon Wilson's 'Somewhere

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in Red Gap,' and inasmuch as he had not read 'Ruggles of Red Gap' I promised to get a copy of it and send it to him. 'Somewhere in Red Gap' is also Mrs. Machen's favorite book. Mrs. Machen said that she was exactly like Ma Pettingill and that Wilson might have drawn the character from her. Paul Jordon Smith was at Machen's once when I was there, and he looked at the Machens off the end of his nose when they expressed their delight in Ma Pettingill and seemed to deplore their literary taste. I found them both delightful. . . . I went to dinner twice with Ronald Firbank, who seems to be a very lonely and unhappy sort of person. He speaks in an undertone, so low that I always had to ask him to repeat everything he said. He explained that he saw so few people he hadn't much practice in talking. He said he had never made a shilling out of his books; and he was very bitter about it. He was very confident, however, that his work would be appreciated by future generations; and he took a sardonic sort of pleasure in the fact that recently people had begun to seek his autograph. He is very grateful to American critics, and especially to Carl Van Vechten, for the praise they have accorded his work. The English are now beginning to read his books."



NOT PRODIGIES AFTER ALL

Saturday, September 1.

Lunched with Amabelle and Ben Ray Redman to-day. Ray had just picked up in a second-hand book store a fine two-volume edition of Lecky's "History of Ration-

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alism," and he said it was one of the most scholarly and fascinating works he had ever read. "And to think," said Ray, "Lecky was twenty-seven years of age when it was published. And yet they talk about the prodigies in the present younger generation." Well, and Christopher Marlowe was twenty-nine when he died, and Keats and Jules Laforgue succumbed to phthisis under thirty, and Theophile Gautier wrote "Mademoiselle de Maupin" at eighteen and Victor Hugo "Bug Jargal" at nineteen, and Sheridan and Congreve were retired playwrights at thirty, and . . . The only prodigious things about our prodigies is that none of them has achieved anything which looks much like a perdurable work of literary art.



PHELPS CAUGHT IN MALICE

Wednesday, September 12.

While discussing the grammatical licensing of the expression "It's me," William Lyon Phelps, in the book "As I Like It," made up of his informal talks in the pages of *Scribner's Magazine*, writes:

"I notice that some school teacher in the West urges its adoption."

What has the New Haven, Connecticut, school teacher got against Dr. Manly, head of the department of English literature in the University of Chicago? Dr. Manley is the school teacher in the West who urges the adoption of "It's me" . . . But it is good to know that dear Billy Phelps can be malicious once in a great, great while.



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THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF WRITERS

Sunday, September 16.

I received a letter yesterday from one of my patients asking me if many of the writers I knew had any "accomplishments," and if so, what kind. That is a very sensible question. I shall try to answer it. It is a mistake for the layman to assume that writers differ very much from other people in their recreations, and it is a very great mistake to assume that writers talk seriously, in their off-hours, about literature.

Writers talk less shop, I believe, than people engaged in any other means of livelihood. In Pullman smokers and in clubrooms it is quite the rule to hear brokers talk about market prices or salesmen talk about the state of trade. But (and perhaps because) writers are so intensely occupied during their working hours with the problems of expressing themselves adequately on paper, that when they are at leisure they like to get as far away from their labors as possible.

Only very young writers, or writers who talk a great deal more (and better) than they write, discuss Art and Style and Culture; the others give themselves over in conversation to gossip and anecdote (if art and artists form the topic of conversation). If they express themselves at all concerning artistic problems, what they have to say is usually reminiscent of something they have just written, and they are, in a measure, "trying it on the dog."

Sinclair Lewis is probably the best entertainer among the writers I have met. He is an excellent mimic. Given a can of talcum powder, a comb and a few moments in which to readjust his haberdashery, and he emerges as a

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ridiculous caricature of a gaunt and pious minister of the gospel or as a Swedish Congressman from Minnesota; he has a ready command of the very shades of a dozen dialects, accents and mannerisms, and he can make an impromptu speech or sermon, apropos of something that comes up in the course of a conversation, which makes his auditors double up with laughter. Lewis is also an amateur in the hazardous profession of the "human fly." I have seen him scale walls and crawl from window ledge to window ledge so perilously that all the women of the party would begin screaming with fright.

Sherwood Anderson is a yarn-spinner; he has never written some of his best tales. Carl Sandburg plays a jew's-harp and a guitar and sings barroom songs. Robert Nathan plays a cello; Ben Hecht plays the violin; H. L. Mencken plays the bass in four-handed arrangements for piano and small orchestra; Edmund Wilson is a sleight-of-hand performer; George Jean Nathan is an expert clog-dancer, having taken innumerable first prizes (incognito) on amateur nights at the burlesque houses; John Dos Passos is a juggler; Alfred Kreymborg plays the mandolite; Maxwell Bodenheim is an exhibition dancer; Carl Van Vechten is a spirit medium; Ernest Boyd is very deft with the musical glasses; Elinor Wylie can throw her thumbs out of joint; Scott Fitzgerald is a high diver and sometimes leaps from great heights into a bathtub only partially filled with water; Samuel Hoffenstein is a ventriloquist; F. P. Adams plays the harmonica; Robert Benchley is good at charades and impersonations; Percy Hammond does the sailor's hornpipe; Wallace Smith and Achmed Abdullah are sword swallowers; Florence Kiper Frank is a toe-dancer; Will Cuppy plays "The Maiden's Prayer" on the piano; Floyd Dell can do a Russian cossack

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dance; James Branch Cabell gives a fascinating exhibition in shadow swordsmanship; Rupert Hughes is a yodeler; Joseph Hergesheimer likes pillow and post office; Charles Hanson Towne and George Chappell are a perfect scream in a burlesque of the opera; Keith Preston is the inventor of a patented pun machine, a mechanical contrivance whereby he can turn everything you say into a neat pun, simply by turning a little knob; Ashton Stevens owes his job as dramatic critic to his skill on the banjo, and Rollin Lynde Hartt, author of "The Man Himself," has an engaging trick of standing a lighted match on one of the tendons of the back of his hand and so flexing that tendon that the match will leap high in the air, execute a pretty spiral and return to its papa.

Even among the writers I know who have no special stunts there are those who are pretty good at card tricks, legerdemain, jugglery and contortions. I have been present at gatherings where all that was needed to call out some recluse talent in a diffident writer was to say "Can any one of you do this?" and to bend back until one's hands touched the floor. Instantly the whole room is abuzz with emulators and contenders for acclaim; unexpected talents reveal themselves from hypnotism to turning handsprings. I have seen a party composed of three eminent novelists, two major poets (one man and one woman) and four established critics, one translator and one publisher turn into a series of crap games at a penny a point.

Yes, writers know how to amuse themselves. And when they converse—but on that point I refer you to Hazlitt's essay called, I believe, "On Conversation Among Writing Men." Hazlitt explains that good writers are

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not necessarily good talkers, and that in the conversation among authors there is likely to be little to remind you of their writings, but, he goes on to say, once you have listened to the conversation of writers it rather spoils you for the conversation of other people. The reason is, he says, that most other people get their conversation and even their expression from things authors write, and is rather likely to be stale and second-hand. It is interesting to note that in the two essays Hazlitt has on this subject he reports very little of what was said. And among the conversations he took part in there were contributions by Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Coleridge and many another literary personage of the day. From memoirs and diaries that have come to light since Hazlitt's day it transpires that the gentle Charles Lamb usually got more than a little drunk at these parties and delivered himself of some biting comments and unflattering epithets; the drunker he was the cleverer and more merciless were his characterizations of men and their work. One would hardly suspect that from reading the "Essays of Elia."



JOSEPHSON AND THE MODERN ÆSTHETIC

Monday, September 17.

Matthew Josephson, one of the editors of the modern review, *Broom*, came to see me to-day and was kind enough to explain to me the æsthetic concepts formulated by him and his confrères in what is perhaps the youngest articulate generation.

"First of all," he told me, rather abruptly, "we are against all the dead lumber which critics like you have been touting." (He may not, to be precise, have been so

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blunt as that: Mr. Josephson is a courteous and well-mannered young man and he had a proper respect for my years; but, though he softened the thrusts with tips of velvet, his poniarding was to the heart and so intended.) "We think that Anatole France, Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather, Joseph Hergesheimer, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Elinor Wylie and all these writers voicing a worn-out, conventional, sentimental, romantic despair and disillusion are all bad writers. They do not express their time; they have nothing to say of any value; they are imitators, following an outmoded tradition. 'Diamond Dick' is better writing: there at least you get something of the quickened movement, the rush and vitality of modern American life. It is healthy and beautiful; the stuff critics have been stuffing down the unwilling throats of American readers is stultifying. No wonder they gag at it. The best writing that is being done in America to-day is to be found in the advertisements. I saw a genuinely beautiful piece of design and a moving bit of literary art in a magazine advertisement to-day. There was a multi-colored field spattered by a great maze of numbers. In the center was the number '57.' Below there was a line, reading, 'Fifty-six is only a number. Fifty-eight is only a number. But 57 means good things to eat.' That is really marvelous; it is fresh; it stands for something; it strikes a responsive chord in the reader; it is vibrant and alive."

From what I could gather, Mr. Josephson's ideas and aims and the ideas and aims of his confrères are salutary as well as interesting. They have the iconoclasm of youth, and that is the best sign in the world. He is of a generation of writers who were still in secondary school

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when the war came on; they were too young to go to war, and the frets, despair and disillusion occasioned by the war in the hearts of many of their immediate elders did not touch them. Most of them went to Europe after the hostilities and roamed about the cultural capitals of Europe—Paris, London, Florence, Rome, Budapest, Munich, Berlin and Vienna. Over there they found that, whereas Americans were turning to Europe (the old, pre-war Europe) for inspiration and traditional guidance, the younger writers of Europe were looking toward America as the one cultural oasis in a universal desert. They were welcoming our jazz tunes as authentic new music; they were praising our architectural triumphs which made the finest cathedrals uninteresting; they found in our billboards and magazine advertisements a rich, new and suggestive form of literature and pictorial design; they found our engines, derricks, cranes and machines a source of new life and an unexplored field of literary expression.

We, of course, had been a little too close to these things to take quite that attitude toward them. I, for instance, cannot work up the enthusiasm of the Messieurs Cocteau, Tzara, Soupault, Bréton and de la Rochelle over the steam-riveter after suffering from a battery of them outside my office window throughout a whole summer. In fairness to Mr. Josephson it must be said that he has found that it will be necessary for him to get away from the noise of New York (now that he has come back to it) in order to enjoy it. Just at present he intimates that he cannot think many thoughts about the inspiration to be found in the clang and clatter of a great modern American industrial city, while so much noise is going on; so he has decided to take a little place in the country.

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On one point I found it necessary mildly to reprove Mr. Josephson, or at all events to disillusion him. He, like Mr. Seldes, of *The Dial*, has just discovered the comic strip, the American vaudeville, Charlie Chaplin, Al Jolson, Fanny Brice, Eddie Cantor, Joe Cook, Ed Wynn, Paul Whiteman, Ring Lardner and the Ziegfeld Follies, and he thinks, like Mr. Seldes, that this is a brand-new discovery; he is in enthusiastic haste to familiarize the good people of America with these artists through the agency of *Broom*, which has a circulation, I believe, of 1,500. He thinks they have been neglected.

I reminded him that, far from neglecting these artists, the appreciative American public has for ten years or more so roundly applauded their work and paid good money to enjoy it that some of these artists are millionaires and the others get salaries which would open a metropolitan bank president's eyes. The great American reading and theatergoing public does not need to be told that Al Jolson, Ed Wynn, Fanny Brice, Herriman, Goldberg, Briggs and Charlie Chaplin are good; it already knows they are. Perhaps, it will be news to readers of *The Dial* and *Broom*. And much may be forgiven Mr. Seldes if he can convince readers of *Vanity Fair* that it is all right now for them to go to musical comedies and vaudeville shows, because he has decided that some of the entertainers there are not entertainers and comedians, but artists.



W. C. FIELDS

Friday, October 12.

With Herman Manckiewicz, in the afternoon, to see the last act of "Poppy," and then went backstage to meet

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W. C. Fields, a superb comedian whose ingenious pantomimic drolleries I have long admired. Phillip Goodman and Miss Lucy Huffaker came in and we argued and chatted until six, when Miss Huffaker got a taxicab and sent me home. I wore away, as a souvenir, one of those little black mustaches which Mr. Fields wears at the end of his nose. The children thought I looked comical, but Hazel didn't. Mr. Fields, who has hitherto been known as a silent comedian, is excellent in this, his first full, straight talking part. He still gets some of his most amusing effects by pantomime and juggling; but his high nasal voice too is funny. . . . Fields is a delightful fellow, rather reticent and diffident.



DR. COLLINS SET DOWN IN MALICE

Thursday, November 1.

After I had made up the book section I checked my bags at the Grand Central and went over to Martha and Eugene Saxton's until train time. Cyril Hume and Grant Overton were there, and Dr. Joseph Collins came in later. Hume (whose new novel, "The Wife of the Centaur," Hazel tells me is a better first novel than "This Side of Paradise") said nothing all evening, although perhaps it was not his fault, for since Martha suggested with ingenious malice that I might do well on the lecture platform and with Dr. Collins talking to us as though we were patients at a consultation, the poor chap hadn't a chance.

Dr. Collins didn't take much to me nor I to him, therefore we were elaborately courteous to each other and

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ready at the slightest opportunity to throw the weight of our opinion (on any unimportant matter) into the scales on the other's behalf against any dissent from Martha, Gene or Grant. Our conversation became a sort of duet—an antiphonal “Don't you think so, Mr. Gallagher?”—“Absolutely! Mr. Shean.”

I am obliged to record, however, that the points we raised with such earnestness and unction and with so much mutual congratulation on the astuteness of our minds were so commonplace that it would have served us right if Gene, in an exasperation of tedium, had chucked us both into the street.

Maybe that was why Hume did not feel called upon to add anything to the discussion.

The doctor's manner is gravely professional, but he is amiably disposed to share freely the ripe fruits of his medical training. Gene was observing that a certain prominent literary personage had shown a quality of arrogance and touchiness which would seem to indicate a painful sense of inferiority. “That, Mr. Saxton,” generously instructed Dr. Collins, “is what is called an inferiority complex.” Doctors often get \$2 for advice less sound than that.

The doctor is modest to the point of diffidence. Martha remarked about the frequency of his visits to Europe. “Oh, no!” he deprecated. “It has been a long time now since I was in Europe—I haven't been there since February.”

The doctor is also a good sportsman. I imparted the information that Dr. Ludwig Lewisohn, who wrote a very severe criticism of “The Doctor Looks at Literature,” was sailing shortly for Europe, and the doctor

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generously proposed, with a certain proviso, to pay Dr. Lewisohn's steamship passage.

He has also a fine urbanity. He asked me if I had been present at the Duse opening at the Metropolitan—"Or don't you go in for that sort of thing?"



ON BUYING A MONOCLE

Monday, November 5.

Lunched with Edmund Wilson at the Princeton Club. Wilson propounded the theory, apropos of "A Lost Lady," that Willa Cather is almost wholly lacking in experiences in life, as a result of which she is unable to realize a situation between two people except when there is a third person present. The scene between Mrs. Forrester and her lover when they are alone in the room, for instance, is, as Wilson pointed out, the only unconvincing one in the book, and it is because Miss Cather was unable to imagine the events of the sleigh ride that she introduced an onlooker, the butcher's boy, through whose eyes the scene is depicted. This is at once her limitation and her strength, for she has an extraordinary capacity for seeing life as it is registered in the experience of others.

Wilson told me an anecdote which he had got from Esther Murphy concerning Lytton Strachey. There was a somewhat bacchanalian party recently in London at which Strachey was present. A scene of a certain piquancy was being enacted in the room and Strachey, bearded, thin, exceedingly angular and a little lit, was surveying it with curiosity. An American girl sidled up to him rather worshipfully and inquired: "What is it,

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Mr. Strachey, that interests you most profoundly in life?" And Strachey, in his thin, high-pitched voice, answered: "I can tell you in a word—passion."

Wilson stopped at an optician's to have his nose glasses repaired, and there I spied some monocles and forthwith bought one. There is nothing the matter with either of my eyes, and the glass I bought is a plain one; it was just a whim prompted by a number of things in the back of my mind. I wanted to see how accurately I could guess what a variety of ejaculations it would evoke when I stuck it in my eye suddenly and without warning. Hazel would say, for instance (and she did), "I don't like it; it makes you look so silly." Some other women would variously remark (and they did), "It is not at all unbecoming," "It makes you look very distinguished, but much older than you really are," "Charming!" "Adorable!" and "For God's sake, where'd you get that thing?" Some men would remark (and they did), "It doesn't look bad, but good Lord! you aren't going to wear it, are you? I wouldn't have the nerve to," "Let me try it on. How do I look with one?" "I'd wear one if I weren't too much of a coward" and "What's the big idea?"

But more than this joy of anticipation was the fact that a monocle acts as a serviceable substitute for the impracticable feature of an idea I have long had in mind. I have wanted to carry concealed on my person three or four varieties of very comical false faces, which I might easily and quickly slip on at certain moments, and thus by introducing the fine element of ludicrousness clear the air of much cant, overseriousness, boring nonsense, pomposity, fakery and overinflated emotions. It would be very effective, I think, in stopping the flow of things you don't want to hear about—your wife's recriminations in

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a bad hour of pique, the dismal, confidential frettings of people who are unable to adjust their lives on any basis of common sense, most people's grave opinions about literature, art and life (I mean the sort of people who want to talk to you seriously and at length about these things). It would help a lot, I imagine, to put on a false face at the right moment during most directors' meetings, committee meetings, office conferences and convention programs, where so much time is wasted in interminable blah. The difficulty is that a false face is too bulky to be concealed. A monocle may be adjusted in the eye before any one present suspects that you possess one.

Another reason which prompted me to buy a monocle is that it provides a pleasant occupation for the hands during conversation when your nervous energy is not under complete control—a pleasanter and prettier occupation than drumming with your fingers (like Sinclair Lewis), swinging your crossed leg furiously (like Ernest Boyd), blowing your nose repeatedly (like H. L. Mencken), biting you cuticle (like ———), fingering, re-lighting, packing and knocking out the ashes of a pipe (like Rollin Lynde Hartt, Christopher Morley, Maxwell Bodenheim, Lynn Montross, Ben Hecht and most pipe smokers), incessantly hitching up your trousers (like Percy Hammond), mopping your face with a handkerchief (like Hugh Walpole), drawing and scribbling with a pencil, or if there is no pencil handy and you are at table with a knife or fork (like Rupert Hughes, Arnold Bennett, Sherwood Anderson, Samuel Hoffenstein and Edmund Wilson), or knocking imaginary dust from your clothes (like George Nathan). A monocle is a nice thing to play with; it may be used to punctuate your remarks

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and in a variety of gestures. . . . In short, I took a fancy to a monocle and I bought one.



BODENHEIM AGAIN

Tuesday, November 6.

Maxwell Bodenheim, who came to interview me in the afternoon for *The Chicago Literary Times*, told me that he had just sold a novel to Harcourt, Brace & Co., which is to be brought out in the spring, and brought me a copy of his new book of poems, "Against This Age" (Boni & Liveright), in which he wrote: "To Burton Rascoe, a tight-rope walker, who sometimes manages to preserve his equanimity." One of the many reasons why I enjoy Bodenheim's company is that he never dissimulates, never says one thing when another thing is in the back of his mind, never makes use of the social subterfuges known as tact and diplomacy. Neither does he expect these things of me. With him I can think my thoughts aloud about him and his work, and he is never so petty-minded as to resent it. And he pays me the same compliment.

On the other hand, he goes into perfect rages of anger when editors flatter his work in declining it. If, in returning a manuscript, an editor would write, "I think your work is abominable; I can't read it and I would not have my readers think I am an imbecile by publishing such stuff," he could understand and respect the sincerity of such an opinion, but some editors, accustomed to let down touchy contributors as sweetly and politely as possible, write Bodenheim that his work is exquisite, brilliant,

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etc., and that though personally they admire his work very much their subscribers are such an insensitive lot of low-grade morons that they dare not affront them by printing anything they would not understand.



A CHAT WITH SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Saturday, November 10.

Lunched with W. Somerset Maugham, who is here to see through the rehearsals of his new play, "The Camel's Back." He is staying in a studio apartment in Fifty-ninth Street and I called there before he went to the Plaza to eat. He appeared after I had been seated, holding his wrist and working it to relieve the muscles, which were cramped from a whole forenoon of writing. He explained that he had never learned to use the typewriter and didn't think he would enjoy writing on one because he liked to see how the words looked as he formed them with a pen.

"Words," he said, "look differently in pen and ink, on the typewritten page, and again as they appear in printer's proofs. Thus I get three sets of impressions as to what my work looks like; but it cramps my hand and wrist painfully to write for long stretches at a time. . . . I write only in the mornings, from 9 until 12, never at any other part of the day. After 1 o'clock my brain is dead—for that sort of thing. When I go on these long trips, to the South Seas, to China, to Siam, I write nothing. But I dictate great masses of notes. (His secretary at this point informed me that on their recent trip through the jungles of Siam Mr. Maugham had dictated

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70,000 words of notes.) I make a first draft of my story, writing straight through without many alterations and then I go over it for changes. My secretary then types it, and I go over it again, making a few corrections. I write as simply and straightforwardly as I can, so I do not make changes for reasons of stylistic ornament. . . . Arnold Bennett never makes an erasure or a correction in his original script: his manuscripts are calligraphic works of art. He makes beautiful initials at the beginning of each chapter and keeps his pages cleans of blots and interlineations. He is a very prolific writer, turning out at least one novel and a great number of journalistic articles every year, so he must write rapidly as well as neatly. He works four hours a day, from 9 until 1 o'clock, regularly and without interruption. He is the most perfect amalgam I have known of a business man and an artist. He tells me that he has never written anything except for money, and I can believe it. Yet 'The Old Wives' Tale,' I think, is one of the greatest novels in the English language. He told me that in his new novels, 'Riceyman Steps,' he had gone back to the manner of the Clayhanger series. I told him I was pleased that he had, and then he added that he had done so because he thought his book would sell better right now if it were in that instead of his later manner."

Some friends came in and after a few minutes' chat about Chicago and New York, during which Mr. Maugham said he loved New York, "because I have all the sensation of being in a cosmopolitan, foreign city and yet being able to understand the language and make myself understood—except to taxi drivers." He is a man of medium height, heavy set, with a large head curving like a tilted question mark from the top of his

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high, slightly serrated forehead. His skin is a yellowish olive; his nose is long, straight high-bridged, and his nostrils curve upward. His mouth is wide, thin-lipped, severe in line, and he has a protruding, cleft chin which he mostly thrusts out with his head back. His hair is dark. He looks to be about thirty-seven, though he is ten years older. He stutters slightly at times when his interest flags for a moment in the subject he is discussing or when he wishes to take issue with something that has been said. I found him one of the most interesting conversationalists I have ever listened to. He had not a light moment during the three hours I was with him, but his seriousness has fire and animation in it, fed by a burning curiosity about life.

I told him I thought that "Of Human Bondage" is one of the greatest novels ever written and I asked him how he came to put so much into it, for it teems with the materials for twenty novels and single chapters might stand as complete short stories.

"Because it is the first thirty years of my life," he said. "I wrote it in two years, began it when I was thirty-seven. When I was a young man, just beginning to write, I met a critic named Andrew Lang, at that time rather famous, who told me that a boy of twenty could not have got any experiences, therefore he could not write out of his own life. He advised me to write romantic novels about the Middle Ages. I followed his advice and wrote 'The Making of a Saint' (the one novel of his which I had told Mr. Maugham I had been unable to read). Later I knew that Lang's advice was all damn nonsense. I had got plenty of experiences; I had been born in France and had lived there until I was ten, when my parents died; I had gone to a private school in Eng-

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land and I had studied medicine in London and in Heidelberg. 'Lisa of Lambeth' is straight out of my experiences as an interne; the story was before me. I did not invent it. I don't believe I have any faculty for invention; I have a very good capacity for photographic reproduction of the things I see and feel.

"As a young man I starved in London writing plays and stories and novels. I wrote plays for eleven years before I had one accepted. From my plays I derived and still derive my principal source of income, but I write plays as a sort of recreation. I hold with Bernard Shaw that writing a play is a little more difficult than writing a short story and a little less difficult than writing a leading article. You over here cannot imagine what difficulties a man who undertakes to become a writer has making a living in England. And it is worse in France. No one in France unless he has an independent income thinks of trying to earn a living by his pen. He goes into medicine or law or into government employ and writes in the evening. He writes few novels and, on the whole, better written ones than the Englishman who tries to earn his living by novel writing. In England a novelist has to produce at least one novel and many odd bits of journalism in order to make a bare living. Even a writer like Bennett or Galsworthy or Wells could not live very luxuriously upon the money from their novels if they did not have their vast and well-paying American audience."

He told me that he had plotted out two novels, one of them a picaresque tale of modern London, one book of travel, which is "not to be the ordinary sort written either by people who do not know how to observe or by people who describe their impressions when they have

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no personality," and two plays. He said that he read very little and that usually he recognized when a novelist had reached the peak of his achievement and thereafter ceased to read him. He had found time, however, to acquaint himself with a surprising number of American writers. He had this criticism to make of them: "Why do so many American writers flare up magnificently with one book, and not only cease to develop but actually go downhill? There is Miss Cather's 'My Antonia,' Sherwood Anderson's 'Winesburg O.' and Floyd Dell's 'Moon-Calf,' all fine, brave, beautiful and unusual books, and then look at 'One of Ours,' 'Many Marriages' and 'The Briary-Bush.' "

I asked him if he did not think Miss Cather's "A Lost Lady" a fine piece of work. He said: "Yes, but her story ends on page 87. It is not a novel; it would have done beautifully as a novelette."

(After I got back home I looked up page 87 of the novel and I cannot agree with Mr. Maugham's dictum. He takes the view, erroneous, I think, that Miss Cather's story is primarily concerned with Neil Herbert and his disillusion. I don't think that that is either Miss Cather's aim or achievement, which I take to be a portrait of a Cytherean against a background of Middle Western life during the era of the change from industrial pioneering to highly organized industrialism.)

"When I came back from my last trip to China," said Mr. Maugham, "I asked Hugh Walpole to give me a list of ten English novels which an ignorant man should read to keep abreast of what is going on. Of the list he gave me there was only one I thought was of any value or significance, 'The Death of Society,' by Romer Wilson. That is a very fine book."

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I remarked that I had not read that novel by Miss Wilson, but had been much impressed by her study of a musical genius, "Martin Schueler," which I thought was, next to Henry Handel Richardson's "Maurice Guest," the finest study in temperament I had ever read. At this his brown eyes flashed intense interest. "Ah! There's a novel. One of the great novels, great in the way that the novels of Tolstoi are great."

Of all modern authors it is Marcel Proust that he delights in the most. "When I was traveling through Siam I took along the last two novels by Proust, and so much pleasure did they give me that I didn't want to finish them. In order not to be through them too quickly I limited myself to twenty-six pages a day."



ELEANORA DUSE

Tuesday, November 13.

With the witness of my elders long since solidified into a legend which my heart and head urged me to reverence, I went this afternoon, as on a pilgrimage, to see Eleanora Duse in "Cosa Sia." What I saw was a charming, elderly gentlewoman, moving within an aura of extrinsic glamour, with a plaintively melodious voice carrying distinct to the reaches of a large theater, and with the most beautiful gestures I have ever seen any human being make—gestures of such plastic grace that I was reminded insistently of Pavlova's dancing.

What I did not see was acting which convinced or touched me for a moment. The Duse seemed to move mechanically, even somnambulistically, as if by rote,

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through the shabby theatrical business of a bad play, her beautiful hands there, but her mind and spirit elsewhere. No one, not even Duse in her prime, though she were thrice the actress in those days they said she was, could redeem "Cosa Sia" from its utter trashiness. "East Lynne" is a brainy work beside it. Why the Duse is so partial to this play in her repertoire I cannot imagine, unless it is that she, too, shares the typical actress's vanity, which causes her to estimate a play in proportion to the length of time it gives her of uninterrupted command of the stage. The whole first act of "Cosa Sia" is, in effect, a monologue.

There was an opportunity in the second act—when her son first denies her in the presence of his gay companions—which the Duse might so have realized to make my heart well up, but (in all humility) I think she missed it clean. Something, anything, to give the feeling of stunned incredulity, swift pain, blank despair, or the horror of one who suddenly finds herself bereft of everything in the world and her sacrifice ironically mocking her—that is what I looked for. A mother would be hurt, visibly hurt, in such an extremity. But the Duse merely outlined her frail, lovely fingers against the brown canvas cliff, took a step forward, prodded with her penitent's staff and awaited her cue to vocalize again. I left the spectacle at the end of the second act, convinced that *il fuoco* had long since flared its last and that there are now but ashes for our reverence.

My unfamiliarity with the language had nothing to do with this impression. From the tenth row, where I sat, I understood the Duse's Italian much more readily than, from a similar vantage, I understood Mrs. Fiske's English. The Duse's enunciation is vibrantly clear; she has

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mastered the trick of throwing a whisper to the galleries; the lines of the play are simple—without subtlety; and any one who takes the precaution of informing himself what the play is about should suffer little embarrassment from his deficiencies in Italian. Nor do I believe that the volatile Italian temperament, in contrast with the more familiar Northern emotional repression, had anything to do with it; for I believe that under the stress of very intense emotion the expression of these temperaments does not vary so much as we are in the habit of thinking they do. During my days as a reporter in Chicago I observed that in the Italian quarter there was much beating of breasts and screaming of voices when the emotions did not amount to much—when, for instance, a husband was dressing down his wife for selling an apple for three cents when she should have got four cents, and the wife was defending herself by reminding him that only yesterday he had committed the same crime; but once I saw an Italian woman whose child was brought to her in mangled remains from the wheels of a truck, and hers was the same unutterably poignant silence of undemonstrative grief we associate with the more repressed peoples. The tragedy was in her eyes; her face was the mask of sorrow.

It is the playwright's fault if he causes the actress to dissipate in words the grief that is conveyed by silence; and my betters tell me that it is precisely in the play of facial expression that the glory of the Duse's eloquence lies. But her intelligence might have rejected "Cosa Sia"; and, in a theater as big as the Century, all of us can't sit in the first three rows. . . . Yet even from the tenth row, or more remote, we can take away a remembrance of beautiful hands moving in rhythmic grace—and credit

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the testimony that when she was younger she had other resources besides these hands.



STARRETT AND THE CHICAGO RENAISSANCE

Thursday, November 15.

In his "Midwest Portraits" Harry Hansen omitted from his gallery one of the most interesting literary personalities in Chicago. Among the writing people there Vincent Starrett is what an artist would describe as the most "paintable subject" of them all, because the very qualities which make him interesting are the most elusive, the most difficult to catch and render accurately. Hecht, Sandburg and Anderson are as easy as Bryan or Roosevelt: their exteriors are sharply outlined and their separate egos are transparent; an hour's talk and another hour with their work and the seeing person has got them; a few sharp strokes and there they are to the life.

Hansen might have done Starrett if he had not been intent on being nice to us all, if he had not resolved not to smile at any time at our expense. He probably forebore to do Starrett out of fear of hurting Starrett's feelings, forgetting that Starrett is precisely the sort of person whom Anatole France delights to portray, and that when M. France smiles most at his sitter's expense he loves that sitter most, because that sitter is a reflection of a part of himself. Or it may be that Hansen has been oblivious or forgetful of the profound, if subtle, influence Starrett has had upon the careers of some of the personalities under Hansen's brush.

To Starrett, Ben Hecht owes the first impulse to what-

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ever literary education he has. Starrett educated the whole prolific local room of the Chicago *Daily News*; he educated scores of groping readers in bookshops and barrooms; he is probably at this moment educating innumerable amateurs, dilettantes and young reporters. He was, I believe, to a large extent responsible for the enthusiasm for good literature which became so infectious among the Chicago reporters that for a long time the local news stories in the Chicago newspapers were the most readable, the best written in the country. Starrett's educative influence was pervasive rather than direct, so pervasive and indirect, in fact, that many of those who owe him the most would probably deny the obligation.

There is one type of man who knows a subject or a number of subjects very thoroughly, but is unable to derive any considerable extrinsic profit from his knowledge; he is the type who loves this knowledge for the inner satisfaction it gives. There is another type who knows no subject very thoroughly and yet is able to profit extensively by that little knowledge. The first may be, for example, a man who has a genuine, jealous, devoted passion for literature. The second, and it includes nearly all creative artists, never reads anything for distinterested motives; he reads for what he can learn in the matter of technique, what he can pilfer, what he can garner as grist for the mill. George Moore has confessed that he never read a book in his life except for a purpose, for what he could turn to account in his own writing. George Moore is a man of the second type; Vincent Starrett is a man of the first type.

I spoke a moment ago of Starrett's educative influence. As a reporter he was not a particularly good one, for he was always much more interested in the writings of other

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men than his own. He was always reading, and, although he rarely talked about what he had read, he was always having in his hands or on his desk books by authors the reporters had never heard of—Stephen Crane, Ambrose Bierce, W. C. Morrow, Richard Middleton, Hubert Crackanthorpe, John Davidson, Arthur Crosslett Smith, Haldane Macfall, Arthur Machen, and now and then a volume of Thackeray, Hazlitt, Lamb, Dickens. When he was questioned he would convey so well his enthusiasm for the author he was reading, so suggest to the reporter that within the covers of this or that book were such worlds of truth and beauty and such a marvelous command of language that the reporter would be reading the book within an hour. It was in this manner that Ben Hecht and Wallace Smith, and, I think, Sherwood Anderson, first heard of Stephen Crane, the first great American realist, and soon, so great was the buzz Smith and Hecht made about Crane in the *News* office after working hours, all the brighter reporters in town had read "The Red Badge of Courage," "Maggie" and the "Whilomville Stories." And so, too, they learned of writers like Edgar Saltus and Lafcadio Hearn and Arthur Symons and Havelock Ellis, who, allusive and infectiously and discriminatingly enthusiastic in their turn about other writers, led these avid young readers to the great body of modern literature from the European continent.

A great university could do no better, I think, than to give Starrett a chair in English literature. He is self-educated; he has no university degree, but he knows the English classics perhaps better than the majority of professors of English in American universities. He would not make his students write idiotic papers about Carlyle's sources or Coleridge's philosophy, or the number of times

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Byron used a certain rhyme scheme and so make them loathe every book they are required to read in class. He would, I believe, inspire in them a genuine love for all that is fine and honest in literature.

Starrett, as I said, loves good writing with a passionate and jealous devotion. He doesn't write about it so very brilliantly or profoundly. He seems to feel and appreciate it better than he can express it—with a surer sense than he can articulate. He has a passion for discovery in literature, and this leads me to one of the most amusing aspects of his character. He is always discovering obscure and unappreciated writers and he is genuinely disappointed when those writers emerge, under his championing, from their obscurity. He was the first in this country to call attention to Arthur Machen as he was among the first to point out insistently the merits of Stephen Crane, Ambrose Bierce, Lafcadio Hearn and Richard Middleton. It was through Starrett that I first heard of that strange American genius, W. C. Morrow, whose weird imagination is seen at its best in "The Ape, the Idiot and Other People," and I believe that Starrett was more than a little put out to discover that I was flirting with one of the literary loves to which he had introduced me. He possesses a number of Machen manuscripts, including some unpublished stories, which he is doling out (perhaps with as much reluctance as opening one of his veins) in the monthly magazine he edits called *The Wave*.

What he will do now I don't know, for he has at least exposed the secrets he has long so zealously guarded. He has published a book under the title "Buried Cæsars" (Covici-McGee) which has meant interminable hours of poring over obscure and dilapidated volumes in second-hand book stores, seeking out evidences of literary talent

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and genius evidenced by men born out of their time, who died unheralded, or who flared unstably for a moment under the eyes of a few discerning readers and sank back into limbo before receiving their due credit. In this book he has brought to light the work and the careers of such writers as Walter Blackburn Harte, the Boston essayist whose fine little magazine, *The Fly-Leaf*, was absorbed by the shrewd commercialist, Elbert Hubbard; Opie Read, the Dickens of Kentucky and Arkansas life; Haldane Macfall, the rich humorist of "The Wooings of Jezebel Pettyfer"; Anna Sewell, the author of "Black Beauty"; Young E. Allison, the Louisville newspaper man who took the refrain, "Fifteen men on a dead man's chest, etc.," in "Treasure Island" and wrote the poem, "The Derelict," which many people suppose was original with Stevenson, or borrowed by him; David Ker, William Marion Reedy and half a dozen more.

To give this book to the public must have cost Starrett much anguish. Unless he has some more discoveries up his sleeve he must be rather miserable. I like to imagine Starrett's great sacrifice, his great renunciation, perhaps on his deathbed, when he will call feebly for his strong box and produce a unique issue of an unknown literary masterpiece, a single holograph copy, never before seen by any other living man except Starrett, and, with the death rattle in his wasted and once handsome throat (for Starrett is the most distinguished looking writer in America), relinquish this priceless treasure to posterity. Or perhaps, he will call for a candle flame and cause his great love to die with him.



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PULLING MENCKEN'S LEG

Sunday, November 18.

John D. Williams, the producer, came to the house with some people this evening and I found him very entertaining, with the sparkling wine of much reading and wide experience on tap. After he had been in the house about half an hour he looked at his watch, which had stopped at ten minutes of two, and, overcome with horror that he had imposed upon our hospitality by keeping us up so late, he grabbed his hat and coat, kissed Hazel's hand and told the women to "Shush! Clear out! This is an outrage!" He was with difficulty persuaded that it was only half-past ten.

His version is better than George Jean Nathan's of the practical joke he and Nathan played on H. L. Mencken. Mencken loathes the theater and probably has not seen a dozen shows since the day he foreswore dramatic criticism by inserting a full page advertisement in a Baltimore paper to the effect that he was through with the theater and would have the law on the next manager who sent him tickets. He also hates, or affects to hate, putting on dress clothes.

There was one especially awful play which Williams and Nathan had decided was the worst play in New York for many seasons. Williams sent Mencken a wire to bring along his dress clothes and come up to see a drama translated from the Hungarian which was the best thing since Ibsen. They sat him in the front seat of a box where, Williams said, Mencken looked as uncomfortable as if he were in a straitjacket. They pointed out some one in the audience as the author, gave him a fine sounding Hungarian name and told Mencken that he was coming to

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their box after the play was over. About half-way through the excruciatingly bad first act Mencken cupped his mouth with his hand and whispered back to Williams, "This sounds like a lot of pishposh to me."

Williams cautioned him against the rudeness of offending the author, who was probably watching his reactions to the performance, and Mencken obediently returned his attention to what was going on on the stage. Throughout dinner Williams and Nathan had pumped him full of stuff about the great merits of the drama and the high distinction the author had achieved in the European theater, and during the first intermission they matched points gravely on the subtle qualities of the first act, while Mencken listened with wide-eyed, credulous amazement, until finally he blurted out, "You are both terrible imbeciles or I'm going crazy—that's the cheesiest play I ever saw in my life, and I've seen some cheesy ones."

At this Nathan told him that if he was such an insensitive ignoramus as all that he might yet have the decency to sit through the show without embarrassing him and Williams and showing himself up as an idiot publicly. Mencken minded like a baby during the second act, but soon began to go to sleep. Williams would nudge him to wakefulness and, in an aggrieved tone, remind him that the author was in the audience. He accused them of pulling a hoax on him and they convinced him they weren't. This went on, with Mencken growing more puzzled, bored and sore at the show, himself and the two jokesters every minute, until finally, according to Williams, Nathan gave the thing away.



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ARTHUR HENRY, WHITLOCK AND DREISER

Monday, November 19.

To lunch at the Sanka Coffee House, and there I met Arthur Henry, former member of the old Chicago White-chapel Club. We fell to talking of the good old days of Chicago journalism, when Eugène Field was writing for *The Daily News* and George Ade was Melville Stone's office boy. Henry at that time was an ambitious youth up from Pecatonica, Ill., looking for a job. *The News* sent him out on assignments, but the stories he turned in never appeared in the paper. The day came when he logically should have been fired. Instead he was told the managing editor wanted to see him. "Young man," said Melville Stone, fixing the young Pecatonican with a stern eye, "we've had one Washington Irving in this country, and that's enough. Go down to the corner and stand there ten minutes. Come back and write just what you saw, not what you thought about it. That's it—that's all there is to it."

A word from Eugene Field had given Henry one more chance, but the weeks passed and still not a line of his appeared in print, till he was assigned to cover a shooting contest at the Country Club. The next day young Henry saw his story on the front page. As usual, he had failed to get the facts and written what he thought. The story he told of the slaughter of live birds created such a stir of indignation throughout the state that a law was passed making the use of clay pigeons compulsory.

Later Henry covered political news with Brand Whitlock for *The Chicago Herald*. After a few years they both found themselves in Toledo, Ohio—Whitlock as Mayor and Henry as managing editor of *The Blade*.

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One day a tall, lanky youth with a funny face drifted into *The Blade*, said he was trying to get to New York and asked for a job. "There's a street-car strike," replied Henry. "They're going to try to run a car through, and nobody around here wants to take a chance." The youth didn't even ask where, turned on his heel, went out—and came back with a whale of a story. The youth was Theodore Dreiser.

A couple of years later Dreiser, Henry and Frank Norris were all in New York free lancing, and all trying to write fiction. They used to meet on a park bench in Union Square every day to talk over their novels, and it was there they worked out the plots for "The Octopus," "Sister Carrie" and "The Unwritten Law." "The Octopus" found a publisher immediately, but the others "knocked around" for quite a while. They were considered too drastic. One reader burned up the manuscript of "The Unwritten Law," but Henry foiled him by having another copy. Henry said he still used that park bench and had written there portions of his first play, "Time."



THE MONOCLE AGAIN

Tuesday, November 20.

Two weeks ago I gave fifty-seven reasons for my buying a monocle, including a plausible one.

In the same issue I soliloquized consciously, though apropos of something else, upon the amiable (and sometimes not so amiable) vice, inveterate to some degree with all human beings, of advancing fraudulent reasons for lines of conduct. This curious need which we seem to

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feel for justifying our inconsequential ways to God and men, I said, eats up a gluttonous portion of our waking hours; and very often (so I attenuated) this debonnaire tossing of wooden nickels into the almsman's hat is unconscious self-deception, wherein we feel surge within our breast the soothing afflatus of naïve complacency and conclude that, taking it all in all, we have acted rather nobly.

Now, among the fifty-seven reasons (including the plausible one) I gave for buying a monocle, none of them was quite the gospel. And, to revert to my original contention, it is a weakness, a wholly discreditable and unnecessary weakness, to justify one's self at any time—unless, say, for instance, one is accused of murder, and even then, if one is actually and circumstantially guilty, it is a waste of breath. Nevertheless—

My act in buying a monocle (if you care to know the truth) was inspired by a little scene in a not very inspiring book, Mr. Carl Van Vechten's "The Blind Bow-Boy"—that scene where the Duke of Middlebottom, on being questioned as to what he would do if his cordless monocle should drop out of his eye, immediately flexed and relaxed the muscles of his face, let the glass smash to smithereens on the floor, took another one from his pocket, adjusted it to his eye, and went on talking without a break in his diction.

That is an ancient trick. In the now long vanished days of *Scheidigkeit*, or military smartness, when among the Prussian officers it was the rule to ape English manners and monocles, affect French phrases and retain a quality of arrogance and ill-breeding peculiarly their own, these swine used to stuff their pockets with reserve monocles so

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that they could drop them repeatedly for effect or by accident and never lower their chins for a second.

I didn't want to ape these swine or even the Duke of Middlebottom. I wanted some pretty girl to ask me what I would do if my monocle should drop out of my eye and break. I wanted then to express such surprise that this distressing thing might happen to me that I would, as if involuntarily, lose control of my facial muscles, thus dislodging the glass from its security, watch with chagrin and sorrow its destruction as it crashed against the floor, and exclaim: "Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis! What'll I do now?" Then I wanted to meditate ruefully for a moment and philosophize like one of the Lightnin's out of a novel by Robert Nathan: "There is only one thing to do—give up wearing a monocle. When a person reaches the point where he can't control himself and his monocle he is in for a bad time of it. The effects of such inadequacy are far-reaching; they embrace embarrassments both of the purse and of the spirit; they are the cause of humiliation and sorrow."

Le Duc de la Rochefoucauld once wisely observed that *dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis, nous trouvons toujours quelque chose, qui nous ne déplaît pas*; or (if you will be so good as to permit me to translate it for you), "When Fate knocks one of our best friends for a row of orangeade stands there is something about the spectacle which makes us want to say 'Attaboy'!" The sagacious duke omitted one detail; he should have underscored *meilleurs*, for it is only our *best* friends who mean so much in our lives that we find pleasure in their adversity. In the adversity of strangers we feel only a negligent and fleeting pity or complete indifference.

There was an earthquake the other day which laid waste

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the entire metropolis of Japan, killed and maimed hundreds of thousands of people and made homeless mendicants of still other hundreds of thousands. Yet I daresay that the combined moments lost in actual pity by the great and generous people of the United States would not total more than two hours and a half. We gave our dollar to the Red Cross or, if we were rich, we had our secretaries make out very sizable checks (according to the credit we wished to maintain), and thought no more about it—unless perhaps to grumble at the stupidity of people who would live in a volcanic country and look to us for help when they get blown up.

No, pity for persons who are not near to us is not possible; nor is any other feeling except the vaguest and most ephemeral sort. For when we hate an entire race or an entire nation—except when we are paid in one way or another to do so—it is usually because one person embodies that race for us and that one person has some time or another trod on our toes or annoyed us or cheated us or beat us at our own game. The last of these offenses is also the last one human nature is disposed to condone. To beat some one at his own game is to strike a blow at his personal identity, his ego, his essential posturing self. Le Duc de la Rochefoucauld knew that they who can strike this blow the hardest are our best friends.

Our best friends are those with whom, whether we are men or women, we are not in active competition involving vital aims. That is why Don Marquis will find something in the news of my adversity in losing yon shattered monocle which will not displease him. Don and I are the best of friends, but he and I lately have drawn perilously taut the thread of this friendship by our competition in the matter of personal adornment. Don, since his return

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from Europe, has a more ample wardrobe than my own, and it includes among other noteworthy items a pair of pearl-gray spats with pearl buttons. But, smart and dashing as that wardrobe is, it does not contain a monocle; and the proprietor of that wardrobe yearns for a monocle most desperately. He was in my office every day for a week trying my monocle on, until I sent him a card announcing "Monocle practice, Mondays and Fridays from 11 until 12 A.M. and from 4:30 until 5 P.M." Under constant drilling and an hour's home work each day he has lost a great deal of his self-consciousness; he has also convinced himself that he ought to wear one, because (he says) he has one good eye and one very bad one, and there is no use having two glasses when only one eye is bad; but he hasn't nerve enough to ask the optician to fix him up. Because I had this nerve—and I might say it is as simple as buying a pink silk envelope; I mean a married man's buying his wife a pink silk envelope—because I had this nerve Don envied me. . . . Yes, Don will not be displeased to hear that my monocle is smashed, though he will most probably affect condolence and say, "Now isn't that too bad!"

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I saw the Guild production of Lenormand's "Failures" last night and liked it, particularly the latter half. Miss Winifred Lenihan's performance was the best I have seen given by any actress this season. At no moment was she unconvincing, at no point did she betray the character she was acting by theatrical falsity or by asserting her personality to the disadvantage of her rôle. There was some puzzlement in the audience and among the critics as to the theme of the play. One critic said he could understand

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how the woman defaulted morally the first time, but not why she persisted in the misdemeanor if she loved her poet-lover as much as she seemed to love him. There should have been no puzzlement about this if the critic had remembered "Manon Lescaut." The play is a naturalistic treatment of the same theme which the Abbé Prévost treated romantically. The difference is only between the somber and jaunty mood, two ways of looking at the same phenomenon.



SNAPSHOT OF SWINNERTON

Friday, November 23.

Frank Swinnerton arrived this morning on the *Berengaria* for a lecture program, which begins on Sunday, December 9, in Town Hall. I met him in the Algonquin lobby in company with Eugene Saxton and Grant Overton. He is a chunky fellow of medium height, with a large head down close on his shoulders. He has a little red smudge of a beard; his upper teeth are set so far forward that he shows his upper gums when he smiles; he peers with a twinkle through thick-lens glasses; his sandy hair is sparse and coarse. His manner is good-humored, cordial, frank. He is the best liked author in England, with the exception possibly of Leonard Merrick, and on meeting him one readily sees why. There is no vulgar pretentiousness about him; he is a man of calm human dignity; he commands respect without exerting himself in that direction; he is the sort of civilized good fellow that one knows instinctively would be an equally stimulating and pleasant companion over a drinking table, through

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the galleries of a museum, on a holiday jaunt or on a tedious railway journey.



LUNCHEON WITH FANNIE HURST

Friday, November 30.

I had an engagement to lunch with Miss Fannie Hurst at 1 o'clock, but I didn't wake up until ten minutes to one, and I had to rush through shaving and dressing in ten minutes and run for a taxi. I wasn't wide awake when I got there, but I was only fifteen minutes late.

It seems that during all the years I have been in newspaper work there has never been a holiday when I didn't have to be in the composing room most of the day and night. Hazel and I had planned our Thanksgiving dinner for to-day because yesterday was make-up day at the office, but we had gone to Samuel Hoffenstein's late last night to join a party which started there with a big dinner. Samuel Shipman, the author of "East Is West" and a half dozen other theatrical successes, was there—a gnome-like little fellow, with blinking eyes, black hair and a diffident smile—and Ernest Boyd and his wife, T. R. Smith, Gabriel Hess, the Goldwyn lawyer, and Charles Parsons, who collects rare books and who bought two of the Arthur Machen manuscripts from the almost complete collection Harry F. Marks had on exhibition last week. It was nearly four o'clock before I got to bed, and I had had a hard week of it, what with staying up two nights working.

All this I explained to Miss Hurst, whom I found delightful and so stimulating to talk to that if was after five o'clock before I realized it. It seemed like about an hour.

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She writes mostly from nine o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon without interrupting her work for lunch; that is, she says, she is at her desk during those hours rather regularly, but often she accomplishes the day's writing during the last half hour of that time. The rest of the time she spends mulling over what she is going to write or trying to get into the mood to write. That sounded very familiar, and I asked her if she had ever worked on a newspaper, I having the theory that the habit of working under pressure in a newspaper office gets so firm a hold on one that even after the necessity for getting work done to catch a deadline is no longer there the habit clings and one finds it difficult thereafter to turn out copy except when one has to do so to meet a promise to one's self or to an editor. But Miss Hurst said she had never worked on a newspaper, and allowed quite sensibly that most writers didn't work except when they had to, or thought they had to.

Miss Hurst is enthusiastic about Vilhjalmur Stefansson's "The Northward Course of Empire" and considers Mr. Stefansson one of the great men of vision in our times. She disagrees with my opinion of Sherwood Anderson's "Many Marriages," holding that it is one of Anderson's solidest achievements and a magnificent novel. But we talked mostly, it seemed, on general ideas rather than about literature. She has a questioning and skeptical mind; she reads, apparently, a great deal of biology and psychology and has freed herself from many of the traditional prejudices and taboos which hedge so many of us in. She had come, she said, to doubt whether many of the precautions we take to preserve health and life are beneficial and she told me of a woman whom she had met who had been through the lowest depths of degradation and had come up

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again, apparently untouched, fresh-looking and radiantly beautiful. So long as the will to live is strong, I ventured, and the endowment of vitality is large, what people call the misdirection of energy is probably only a manifest of that energy; life renews itself, according to the biologists, by expending itself. And so the afternoon passed quickly and pleasantly with us in a give and take of views, after which Miss Hurst showed me through her new house, with its huge high-ceiled living-room, alcove dining-room and charming kitchen on the first floor, and her workroom and charmingly furnished bedrooms on the second floor. She has an interesting collection of Renaissance objets d'art.



A PRESENT FROM RUPERT HUGHES

Friday, December 7.

A letter from Rupert Hughes, relates that "Noting in your 'Daybook' of November fifth what you said of 'Le Moyen de Parvenir' and your inability to afford a seventy-dollar edition, I am sending you a copy. I don't know whether you accept presents from strange gentlemen or not, but this copy cost me only fifty cents, and I have another which has been very dear to me for many years. This one suffers from being marked a bit, but I hope you will take as much pleasure in this amazing work as I have done. I turn to it for unfailing refreshment, as I do to Chaucer."

Although that bland little confession of poverty fetched me six copies of "Le Moyen de Parvenir"—all of them from kind and thoughtful people who deprecate their generosity by assuring me they have other copies and that

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they are sending me inferior ones—I am especially glad to have the one from Captain Hughes, because it contains his book-plate and his underlinings. And since all of the copies sent me are of varying editions, with different sets of footnotes and appendices, I shall return none of them. The book, so much as I have read of it, is of sufficient, curious merit for one to study it with such exhaustiveness as to base one's claim to scholarship by becoming an authority on it. If nothing else it is an amazing exploitation of the resources of the French language in the matter of saying one thing and meaning another. It is an *olla podrida* of wit and tap-room anecdotes, recondite allusions and outlandish erudition, pious reflections and Rabelaisian buffoonery. As little as I have got into it—and I am savoring it with the utmost delight—I have discovered that it is from this book that Balzac pilfered a number (perhaps most) of his stories in “*Les Contes Drolatiques*.” It is a book written, the author says, with satirical intent, by Beroalde de Verville, the good canon of Saint-Gatien of Tours, toward the end of the seventeenth century. It is certainly one of the curiosities of literature; but, remembering Rabelais and Apuleius, it is, I think, much more than that. Arthur Machen once made a translation of it, but the translation is not generally available.



THE DIFFICULTY OF INTRODUCING HUDSON

Monday, December 10.

Lunched to-day with John Macrae of Dutton's, the man who some years ago worked out with Dent, the London publisher, the scheme of the Everyman's Library—a magnificent and invaluable series of well-edited, unabridged

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reprints of the classics in every branch of English literature. He told me how he had first got enthusiastic about W. H. Hudson. He had been in conference with Dent all afternoon in London, fighting with him over the first fifty titles to be included in the Everyman's Library, and had planned to have a good dinner, drink a half bottle of champagne and go to bed and read until he fell asleep. It was damp and foggy and he dropped into a second-hand bookstall and found a book with a title which piqued his interest, "The Purple Land." He bought it from the grouchy and discourteous bookseller, who seemed to resent his coming into the shop, and began reading it after dinner. He finished it early in the morning, and the next day, enthusiastic, he went in search of the publisher, Duckworth, to make terms with him for the American rights.

"It was a hard row to hoe, getting Hudson started with the public," said Mr. Macrae, "and it was the same with Samuel Butler, and it is the same usually with a good writer who is unknown to the public. You recall that George Meredith as a reader for Chapman & Hall turned down 'The Way of All Flesh'? That was in the old days when publishers wouldn't publish anything they didn't personally like or which went against their prejudices. I have a copy of Meredith's letter about the book. If Meredith had been one of my readers I would have published 'The Way of All Flesh' on the strength of that letter alone: it is a bitter, angry denunciation of the book, venomous. I should have said that any book which affected Meredith in that fashion at least had something in it to stir people up and make them read it, and so I should have published it. Sometimes I have published a book after as many as eleven readers have turned thumbs down against it—I judge by the reactions of the readers to what degree

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the book will interest the public. Now and then there is something about the publishing business you can't figure out. Take Leonard Merrick, for example. Now he is a capital story teller; his books are easily read and mightily entertaining; women have told me that he knows more about women than any writer they have read; he has been highly praised by Galsworthy, Bennett, Barrie and all sorts of writers and critics; but he hasn't yet the audience he ought to have."



THE AMUSING EFFRONTERY OF FRANK HARRIS

Sunday, December 16.

Up at 2:30 this afternoon and, after bath and breakfast, I plunged into "Contemporary Portraits: Fourth Series," by Frank Harris. I mean to write more extensively about this book later, but what a vigorous and interesting personality Frank Harris is! Half the time you can't believe him, but what does that matter? In the earlier series of "Contemporary Portraits" he puts all the brilliant sayings in his own mouth and makes even such renowned wits as Wilde and Whistler seem like inarticulate boobs beside himself; but the fellow has gusto; he compels interest; he is a swashbuckling, sanguine, cavalier sort who, by all rules of law and order, ought long ago have been strung up by due process of law or shot down by some pernicky observer of the code. Harris has an enviable gift for characterization and personal description. I have never seen Max Beerbohm; I have seen only photographs and caricatures of him by his own and other hands; but this description, I take it, is perfect: "When I first saw him, Max Beerbohm reminded

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me of one of those lunar creatures, visitants from some other planet, with more brains than we earthborn folk, and no passions. A large round head and goggly, round eyes were accentuated, so to speak, by a very slight, youthful figure of middle height, peculiarly well dressed."

When the late President Harding was a Senator he invited Harris (at the request of some mutual friends and admirers) to come out to Marion, Ohio, and talk things over. Harris began by saying that he had always considered Senator Harding as an ignorant reactionary; whereat Harding bristled and reminded his interviewer that he had been considered by his colleagues as a very liberal, even a radical person. Harris then proposed to test his liberalism by outlining a plan for the scrapping of the American navy and fortifications, and applying the money thus saved for the subvention of American opera, schools of drama, and other civic, cultural enterprises. Senator Harding replied, "I never heard such an insane proposal in my life!" And, of course, he was right; but the quixotic Harris turned upon his heel and stalked out of Harding's presence, convinced that the then future President of the United States was a negligible and unintelligent materialist. On his first encounter with Maxim Gorki, Harris demanded to know why Gorki had not been truthful and explicit, in his autobiography about his sex life, and when the Russian writer replied that he had seen no necessity to put such things into writing, Harris turned on his heel and left Gorki without so much as making his adieux. . . . He is like that all the way through the book. That is what makes his stuff so interesting.



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"ÆSTHETE: MODEL 1924"—TIMELESS AND UNIVERSAL

Monday, December 24.

Hazel and I went to "The Alarm Clock," a French farce adapted by Avery Hopwood, which I thought was pretty awful, what with the actors trying so desperately to save it that they all but turned handsprings and rushed off the stage to hug the audience. Then we went back to the house to trim the Christmas tree, which was so huge that we had to saw it down to get it to stand upright in the room. Edmund Wilson came up, and, since Hazel, Henry and Frances seemed to be breaking enough baubles and dropping enough things among them, I restrained myself from adding to the fatalities and talked to Wilson. He told me that Malcolm Cowley and Matthew Josephson were much cut up about Boyd's skit in the *American Mercury* called "Æsthete: Model 1924." Especially was Cowley vexed, it seems, and believes that the literary cause (whatever it is) that he is interested in has been very seriously damaged by what he considers an ill-natured attack.

This is very curious, for, although I recognized the features of any number of other people in Boyd's composite picture, I didn't recognize Cowley, and I asked Wilson what Cowley had written besides some book reviews in *Broom*.

Wilson said he had written some poetry, some of it very good; but that Boyd had not given any indication of including Cowley in his portrait.

This piece of Boyd's seems to have caused a great stir, out of all proportion to its manifest intention, which is merely a deft bit of kidding. That it is ill-natured or even damning to the young men I cannot see; by a

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change of years and a few appurtenances it might have been a composite picture of Mencken, Nathan, Boyd and Stuart P. Sherman in their youth; for it will be remembered that as a young man in college Professor Sherman was an æsthete of the model of the Yellow Nineties, and that he wore a yellow cornflower in his buttonhole, recited "Cynara" soulfully, and spouted Baudelaire; and that Mencken wrote an introduction to a volume of plays translated from the French of Eugene Brieux and saluted them as nothing less than epoch-making in ideas and dramaturgy; and that Boyd hasn't yet shaved the beard he grew as a young man in Paris when all the geniuses of the Left Bank wore beards.

There is nothing disgraceful that I can see about the fact that a number of young men have the courage to interest themselves in cultural matters rather than grow into Babbitts, and if some aspects of their cultural enthusiasms are ludicrous they are no less admirable on that account. If Cowley or any one else who fancies himself ridiculed in Boyd's skit can't take a kidding, he is hopeless. A similar piece might have been written about the Irish Renaissance, during which Yeats, Synge, Stephens and Joyce emerged; in fact, George Moore rather did it; and one might be written about every cultural center in Europe.



ERNEST BOYD: ELEGANT READING MACHINE

Friday, December 28.

Toward the end of the year 1923, during the reign of Calvin the Cool, a hard-working linguist and critic, named

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we shall say (for purposes of concealment) Ernest Boyd, racked his brains through the forepart of a long night for an idea which he might blow into a sizeable article he had promised the editors for the first number of *The American Mercury*. This Boyd was a mild gentleman, habitually clad in somber brown from shoes to hat, who (so far as appearance goes) would have done rather better than Anton Lang in the chief rôle of the Oberammergau Passion Play. He was given to indignations, but only of a scholarly character; an error in translation would fever him with a terrible animus and a misquotation, however harmless, would make his blood boil. Toward other matters, social, moral or political, he maintained a complete indifference: so long as men did not attribute to Basius Secundus sentiments which had actually been uttered by Aristides of Smyrna, and did not misconstrue in translation the exact meaning of a phrase, it mattered not a whit to him how they cast their votes, what beliefs they subscribed to or what breaches of decorum they were in the habit of observing.

He was a man of vast learning, who spoke with ease and fluency no less than thirty languages and dialects, both ancient and modern, including Gaelic and American. His interest in literature and erudition was singularly pure; it contained no adulterate of moral fervor or political parti-pris; it was a voracious and consuming passion; he read with impartial eagerness everything that got into print—complete issues, every word, of the *Dial*, *Broom*, *Bookman*, *Yale Review*, *Vanity Fair*, *S4N*, *TNT*, *The Pagan*, *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, *The Westminster Gazette*, *Variety*, *Zit's*, *Mercure de France*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *The Irish Statesman*, *The New Republic*, *The Freeman*, *The Nation*, *The Double-Dealer*,

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The Wave, The Reviewer, Die Zukunft, the complete issues, wants ads and all, of the Sunday papers, every book review and literary article published on the European Continent and in the dominions of Great Britain, including *The Peking & Tientsin Times*.

The postal authorities found it necessary to assign a special dray and employ three piano movers to make the daily deliveries of bales of reading matter at Boyd's address on the fifth floor of an apartment building in East Nineteenth Street. Authors, eager for an American audience through translation, sent him their new books as fast as they came off the presses in Paris, Berlin, Budapest, Milan, Seville, Athens, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Nijni-Novgorod, Tronjhem, Warsaw, Bremen, Calcutta, Vienna, The Hague, Amsterdam, Geneva, Marseilles and Cologne. Four thicknesses of books lined the walls from floor to ceiling in every room, closet and hallway. Books, paper bound and in board, cloth and parchment, were piled under the beds, tables and bath tubs; they were hung from the ceiling in hammocks; piles of them served as a dining table and still other piles of them served as chairs; the building in which this vast accumulation of reading matter was lodged sank three feet out of plumb under the strain and steel supports had to be leveled against the walls to keep a flood of books from inundating the environs of Gramercy Park.

To the business of reading this avalanche of printed words, Boyd addressed himself with inordinate conscientiousness. Nothing escaped him; if some poor hack of a scribbler in the back pages of *Le Monde Nouveau* wrote a paragraph about Jack London under the impression that London was still alive, or some hurried piecework translator innocently followed a misprint in a Latin-American

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novel, Boyd would know about it and would take it as in the nature of a personal outrage.

He was a great purist in diction, and he cherished the quaint notion that prose and poetry should make sense. This notion put him to great inconvenience and plagued his nights with wrathful distempers; for he was bound to keep up his reading, and a great deal of the stuff in the more advanced reviews—both prose and poetry—didn't make sense. Part of its charm lay in its naïve or intentional mystification.

It was the interesting vogue of the day for writers, critics as well as poets, to put down words or sounds, even if the sounds did not fit any word in the vocabulary, just as they came out of their heads, without order or sequence. Thus, some of the most cried up poetry of the day, both in France and in America, was poetry in which words were dispensed with altogether and geometrical designs were worked out with such typographical devices as c @ / - ? ! % ‡ " & \$ (- ; and).

Thus, a musical critic, a very cultured man of exquisite sensibility, discarded the idea that criticism is comment and sought to convey to his readers, through the media of words the exact sensations visited upon his sensitivity by the sounds Mr. Ornstein evoked from the piano. This was a worthy enterprise, and the critic was successful in it in the case of quite a handful of readers. It can hardly be counted to this music critic's discredit if Boyd and a great number of others did not possess a sensitive apparatus identical with that of the music critic and was uncomprehending and discourteous enough to refer to such musical criticism as nonsense.

Then, too, there were some earnest and eager young men who began to feel that the English language was in

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a bad way and needed to be shaken up a bit. Their preoccupation was with rhythm and cadence—at least they used these words very frequently—and with form, rather than with matter. They achieved some rather astonishing feats with words in this shaking up; but in the end, their preoccupation did not stand them in good stead, for when they came to explain their aims to the multitude in the sequential order of words which the multitude could understand, their words had a habit of reading along all right, but without conveying any meaning.

These young men seemed to have lost the faculty of making sense altogether. This was especially unfortunate, because they began to fight among themselves about their theories only to find that they were equally as unintelligible to one another as they had been to the general public. The result was a lamentable confusion, with denials, recriminations, prayers to St. Guillaume Apollinaire, references to Lessing, invocations of Tristan Tzara, and echoes of arguments from the nuts of the Café de la Rotonde.

Boyd, ever a glutton for printed words, tried to follow all this. The stuff seethed in his brain, giving him nightmares and nervous disorders. Misprints and faulty quotations, sewer French, badly mangled and incoherent English, expressionism without expression and Modernists fighting among themselves about the writings and aims of foreign writers they imperfectly comprehended—all this gave Boyd the jim-jams. Then a strange thing happened. Flagellating his cerebral cortices for the article he had promised the editors of *The American Mercury*, his phantasmagoria of impressions began to synthesize and assume shape in a composite picture which he sketched out and entitled “Æsthete: Model 1924.”

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Two hours after the edition of the magazine appeared on the stands, Greenwich Village was in an uproar. The whole literary left wing, which had hitherto been disorganized by internecine strife, solidified against the perpetrator of the article. Obscure poets and art theorists who had never been heard of before began collaring people and calling them up on the phone, saying that Boyd had themselves especially in mind when he wrote the piece and that they meant to have his blood. The progress of literature was deemed to have been stopped by the article and American culture set back a hundred years.

The whole edition was gobbled up within ten hours and another edition put on the presses; most of the readers were young writers who assumed at once that they had been personally and specifically libeled in the article. East Nineteenth Street swarmed with the younger poets, and when the venerable Boyd set out on his morning constitutional he was greeted with a fusillade of ripe tomatoes, riper eggs, sticks, stones and copies of *S4N*, and barely escaped back into his house with his life.

There he was kept a prisoner by expediency for three days while Dadaists pushed his door bell, kept his telephone abuzz, scaled the walls to his apartment and cast old cabbages and odor bombs through the windows, sent him denunciatory telegrams, and rigged up a radio receiving outfit with an amplifier through which they broadcast the information that he was a liar, sneak, thief, coward and no gentleman.

When one of the poets let loose to Boyd over the telephone a string of vilely obscene abuse Boyd mistook the recital for one of the poet's poems, and so only further infuriated the poet without giving him satisfaction,

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whereupon the poet challenged Boyd to a fist fight, and when Boyd declined the invitation the poet spent \$64 for telegrams to important personages who knew nothing about the article and nothing about the signer of the telegram and very little, if anything, about Boyd, declaring that Boyd was a disgrace to humanity.

Barricaded behind his books, subsisting on depleted rations and grown wan and weary under the assaults and harassments, Boyd calling heaven to witness that he had never heard of or read anything by any one of some dozens of his most revengeful assailants and that they had read into his article hints about their private life which he had no intention of putting there nor on re-reading could discover. . . . Meanwhile thus, fortuitously, was *The American Mercury* greeted with a sales reception which boggled the wildest expectations of the editors.



A GLIMPSE OF EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Monday, December 31.

Went to the Playboy Ball in Webster Hall to-night, where I met for the first time, Edwin Arlington Robinson, the poet, perhaps our most considerable American poet since Whitman and Poe. He is a lank, stooped, youngish looking person, with black hair and mustaches, and he wears nose-glasses. He was with Herbert Gorman, Lloyd Morris and a party. I tried to tell him I thought that his poem, "Richard Cory," is a powerful symbol of contemporary industrial American civilization, where the appearance is all one of prosperity, benevolence,

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happiness and contentment and that beneath there is a less happy aspect of the matter, and that "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man From Stratford" is one of the few great poems in our literature; but I don't think I managed to get myself heard above the roistering din. Harry Kemp was trying to say something to Mr. Robinson, too, but Mr. Robinson looked at him with a strained despair as if to convey that it was useless to try to hear anything.



I-9-2-4

A VISIT FROM ARCHIPENKO

Thursday, January 3.

Alexander Archipenko, the foremost modern Russian sculptor, and Mme. Archipenko came to see me this afternoon, bearing a note from A. Van Ameyden Van Duym sent to me from Berlin. All sculptors, I have noticed, are solidly and powerfully built physically, with heavy, short necks, broad shoulders, deep chests and strong, muscular arms and hands; they have physiques which might identify them with blacksmithing or pugilism or wrestling, did not the delicate modeling of their facial features betray them as men of creative imaginations. Archipenko is no exception to the rule; he is of medium height, strongly knit, with a large head chiseled in straight angles and broad, flat planes, with black, overhanging eyebrows shadowing steady, glowing eyes. He has, too, a naïveté which I have come to associate with all really gifted painters, sculptors and musicians—a grown-up, boyish sort of quality—a quality, for instance, which in Archipenko's case makes Mme. Archipenko seem infinitely the more worldly wise and knowing of the two. Mme. Archipenko is black-haired, statuesque, quite beautiful. He talked to me in German, telling me that he had come to America to stay perhaps a year, perhaps two years, and that he was to have an exhibition at the Kingore Galleries beginning January 20. He has brought most of his best work over here. He is one of the most daring and most visionary of the moderns; he has made numerous revolutionary experiments in abstract form, in

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one case using indented spaces in sculpture to convey the impressions which are ordinarily made explicit by relief. That is to say that in a sculptured portrait of a feminine nude he has hollowed out a cavity for the head, and so has permitted one's mind's eye to imagine what the head would be like.



PAUL ELMER MORE

Saturday, January 5.

This evening, while I was waiting for dinner, I read Paul Elmer More's "Hellenic Philosophers: The Sophists, Stoics, Epicureans," etc. Now, More is not such a bad writer; he has really a very agreeable style; but he is just the sort of person who ought never to write on any subject that is remotely human. I seem to feel that he ought to be writing on the higher mathematics, the fourth dimension, or something of the sort. He knows a lot about Sanskrit and the mystical Hindus, I understand, and I don't see why he doesn't stick to such matters. I feel just like Gerald Stanley Lee, who wrote of More: "There is something about Mr. More's writing, a kind of taut intellectualism—a judging tone—that strains or worries the reader sooner or later into being contrary. When I came, for instance, upon Mr. More's assertion that W. B. Yeats had a defalcated intellect, I wanted one."

That's just it! Mr. More is the sort of person who makes me want to be everything he is against even if I know it isn't good for me. If he were against Judas Iscariot, I swear I would begin to believe that Judas was a compendium of all the virtues. I have never read any man who seems so absolutely wrong on everything.

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He may be a very great Greek scholar, but I know from reading his chapters on Aristippus and Epicurus that he has a very funny notion of the philosophy propounded by these men. He makes them out to be United Brethren or Campbellites or Baptists. In the case of Aristippus and largely in the case of Epicurus he hasn't any more to go on than I have in reading Diogenes Laertius (whom I have been reading off and on these fifteen years), and yet the way he twists things!

For the Sophists I have always had a particular regard, just as I have had for the Jesuits. The Sophists and the Jesuits (I mean the Jesuits who have not been explained away by the Jesuitical apologists) have always seemed admirable men, with a fine sense of values; they were tolerant and they had a sense of humor; they had opinions, but no convictions; they were sensible philosophers. Mr. More, I contend, does not understand them; he doesn't understand any one who doesn't think along the same narrow groove he does. And that reminds me I am probably one of the few persons in the world besides Mr. More and the proofreader who has read all of the Shelburne Essays by Mr. More. By those who have read him casually now and then, Mr. More is accounted a scholar. I am a very poor scholar, but wait until you see the errors in scholarship I have caught him in—the wrong attributions of phrases, the mistakes in pure fact, the numerous errors in small pedantic matters, which give to a pedant his sole excuse for existence! I have nearly two notebooks full of them. About More I might say, as Ambrose Bierce said of Brander Matthews, "He is nothing if not accurate, and he is not accurate."



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DONALD EVANS

Saturday, January 5.

I went to a party at Philip Moeller's this evening. Moeller and Van Vechten matched stories to Hazel and me about that extraordinary person, Donald Evans, the poet, who apparently ended his own life by asphyxiation some years ago, and whose "Sonnets From the Patagonian" were the first experiments in the sort of thing done now, say, by E. E. Cummings and the younger men. Evans was a copyreader on the *Times*, a man who was meticulously exacting in his job, careful of commas and grammatical construction, but who led a life away from his work which was rather extraordinary.



EDITING IN A MUSIC HALL

Friday, January 11.

Ernest Boyd tells me that Hueffer and Douglas Goldring used to edit *The English Review* from a stall in a London music hall; they read the manuscripts and edited the magazine there while dull turns were on the bill. The magazine read as though it might thus have been edited; by which I mean that the stuff the editors printed read as though they had thoroughly enjoyed their job.



THE ART OF W. C. FIELDS

Saturday, January 12.

With Herman Mankiewicz to the dressing room of W. C. Fields, the comedian of "Poppy," where Fields

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told me that, having always been a pantomimist in vaudeville and in reviews, he at first declined the part offered him by Philip Goodman in the play Goodman had written for Fields, feeling, in all modesty, that he would be no good as a comedian if he had a talking part, and even expressing a doubt whether he could remember his lines.

Goodman told him that he would have a man in the wings to feed him the lines at every appearance, and insisted that Fields take the part. It was a hit on a hunch, just as Goodman's hunch that a play by Don Marquis built around "The Old Soak" would be a hit was. Comic "business," Fields told me, gets more laughs in a short sketch than the funniest lines, and that in writing a sketch with comic business and comic lines it is necessary to spread the lines out at non-business intervals else they will be drowned by the laughter provoked by the "business" or pantomime.



A CONCERT OF MODERN MUSIC

Sunday, January 13.

I went to the second concert of the International Composers' Guild. It was interesting and amusing, but I don't see why they don't call it a party instead of a concert. While their own numbers were not being played, composers and musicians whose work was on the program were running up and down the aisles, greeting friends, chatting loudly, clapping one another on the back. But perhaps I am in an old-fogyish error in this matter; perhaps some of the pieces were scored for conversation, hand-clapping, footsteps, bustle, laughter and general buzz. This might well be; for Edgar Varèse had a re-

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freshening piece scored for instruments whose sounds were made to imitate buzz-saws, rasps, flat-wheels, bronchial trouble, babies' rattlers, and exhaust pipes. Most of the twelve piano studies by Karol Szymanowski I thought were exceedingly fine and E. Robert Schmitz's playing of them seemed to me such mastery as I have seldom heard. I liked, too, the piece by Carlos Salzedo, "Preamble et jeux," and the five pieces for string quartet by Alfredo Casella. During the intermission I talked to Archipenko, the Russian sculptor; Covarrubias, the gifted young Spanish caricaturist; Hans Stengel, Varèse and Dr. Henry K. Marks. Whatever else may be said about these modernist concerts, they are never tedious or boring.



MODERN SCULPTORS

Friday, January 18.

Bob Linscott came to lunch and we went first to Archipenko's studio and then to the exhibition of work by Kadinsky and Paul Klee at the Société Anonyme. Archipenko was packing up his work for the opening of his exhibition, but enough pieces were about for us to gather impressions of his ability. Linscott and I both liked best his simpler pieces, his elongated torsos, with the high, narrow busts and long sinuous flanks and legs of his feminine nudes, minus heads; but Linscott thought he would "like to live with" some of the more revolutionary experiments in colored bas-relief, the strangely attractive realizations of abstract form. Best of all I liked a little bronze in which the contours only of a feminine figure were delineated.

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I can't think of Archipenko as a great sculptor, as great among the living, for instance, as Szukalski, Mestrovich, Bourdelle and Maillol (and of these I think Szukalski is the greatest); Archipenko is too naïve in his sophistication, too deliberate in his simplification; but he has his moments. His portrait bust of Senator McCormick, done in the conventional manner, is the sort of thing any promising art student might do, and his portrait bust of Secretary Hughes is the sort of thing I might do, indeed, with my limited experience in modeling I would undertake to do, on a wager, a better one, so far from a portrait or a caricature is it. Archipenko told me that he was allowed only a short time in which to make the Hughes bust; but no artist who has any regard for his reputation would urge lack of time against the inadequacies of his art: he would destroy the bust, preferably.

Kadinsky I cannot "see"; and Klee seems to me, for all his broken lines and child-like simplifications and daring alignments of color, essentially a line artist, and as a line artist essentially a caricaturist, and as a caricaturist vastly inferior to Georg Grosz. They both see the human race as verminous; but Grosz is more savage, direct, compelling; he has not merely taken over the child's blackboard technique; he has sophisticated it.



MENCKEN: SHIRTSLEEVE AUTOCRAT

Friday, January 25.

Mencken once engaged in a book-length debate, in the form of letters, with Robert Rives La Monte on the subject "Men vs. the Man." Mencken argued fiercely

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for individualism, *les droits de seigneur*, aristocracy, and the right of the few to exploit the weak. La Monte argued with equal heat for the rights of the proletariat, the need for Socialism, and the blessings of altruism and the equal chance. The joke of it is that Mencken at the time was sweating away in his shirt sleeves at a newspaper job, while La Monte was taking his ease on a beautiful country estate in Connecticut.



MARLOWE'S "MIGHTY LINE"

Friday, February 1.

No essay on the grand style ever omits to include as an example of Marlowe's "mighty line" and as the essence of the grand style this poetic flight:

*Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?*

And the scholiasts have agreed that Shakespeare must have remembered this when he wrote of Helen in "Troilus and Cressida":

*Why, she is a pearl
Whose beauty hath launched above a thousand ships.*

But why, I wonder, has no one observed that Marlowe's mighty line is almost a literal translation from Lucian? In the "Dialogues of the Sea Deities" there is a scene between Menippus and Mercury. Menippus asks to be shown among the dead all of the famed beauties of the

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other world—Nireus, Narcissus, Hyacinthus, Achilles, Tyro, Leda and Helen. He is shown, at last, Helen. I quote from Edward Leed's (1772) translation:

Menippus—How! was it for that, that all Greece embarked upon a thousand ships, and so many brave men perished, and so many towns were reduced to ashes?



SWINBURNE AND LORD MORLEY

Monday, February 4.

Edmund Gosse has divulged the long-guarded secret that it was John Morley who wrote the critical diatribe against Swinburne's "Poems and Ballads" in *The Saturday Review* for August 4, 1866, which scared the publishers into withdrawing the book. Morley and Swinburne later became close friends and Morley became one of Swinburne's most helpful and adulant critics; but Morley was so ashamed of having written the anonymous critique that, though he conferred to Gosse that he was the culprit, he begged Gosse not to disclose the fact until after his death. Gosse says that Morley fancied that Swinburne did not know who the author was, but some papers Gosse found among Swinburne's effects disclosed the fact that Swinburne not only knew who wrote the review, but had been impelled by it to write a satiric verse about Morley.

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There is a story in Reginald Blunt's "Mrs. Montagu: 'Queen of the Blues'" that Lord Chatham, the Pre-

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mier, so greatly over-ate that he got the gout; the gout hurt him so painfully he lost his reason; when he lost his reason he no longer over-ate, and so lost his gout, and when he no longer had the pain of the gout he regained his reason. . . . In our current folk-lore there is a ribald variation of this yarn.

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While reading H. C. Bailey's "The Continuity of Letters" to-night I ran across a slighting reference to Arnold Bennett in a discussion of the Grand Style. It was not enough for Mr. Bailey to avow that Bennett has never achieved the grand style (no one ever said he did); but he spoke of Bennett's writing as though it were journalese. I could not take much stock in Mr. Bailey's pronouncements after that. I do not remember to have seen a passage by Arnold Bennett represented in any anthology of English prose; but if there is any one living who writes a clearer, more direct and vibrant prose than Arnold Bennett, I should like to know who it is. There is nothing he has ever written, even in his little books of commonplace philosophy, which has not gusto.



THE SUPPRESSION OF "FANTASIUS MALLARE"

Thursday, February 5.

Last night I received the following telegram from Harry Hansen, literary editor of the *Chicago Daily News* and author of "Midwest Portraits":

"Ben Hecht and Wallace Smith fined thousand each after plea *nolo contendere* Federal Court to-day. Judge advised them hereafter play according to the rules."

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Hecht, as the author, and Smith, as the illustrator, had been haled into court with their publishers, Covici-McGee, in Chicago nearly a year ago on the charge of violating the Federal laws in regard to the publication and distribution of salacious matter. The book which caused the trouble was "Fantasius Mallare," which was certainly "lewd, lascivious and obscene" under the legal interpretation of those adjectives. Moreover, it was a bad book in almost every artistic particular; it was a series of uncorrelated episodes and reveries, morbid and sophomoric in character, artificially patched together; it had no form or unity, and, except for isolated passages of fine imagery and verbal brilliance, it was without merit or distinction. The drawings by Smith were intended to be phallic symbolism, but they were merely phallic; for phallic representations as obvious as those Smith had drawn could not properly be termed symbolical.

It was unfortunate that the book should have found a publisher; and I think that the Federal judge who handed down the decision gave the defendants some wise advice when he suggested that hereafter they should play according to the rules. The book had been, in reality, a deliberate challenge and defiance. The author, if not the illustrator, I suspect, entertained a secret hope that the book would be suppressed; for he wanted to force the issue in the matter of censorship and he wanted to air in court his theories as to the censors and their interference with the free play of the creative spirit. This would have been a noble enterprise, messianic in conviction and enhaloed with the luminosity of martyrdom, if only Hecht had taken the trouble to provide himself with a leg to stand on. On the contrary, he deliberately chopped off both legs.

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There was little in the book proper (except for the illustrations) which would offend the most tetchy of moralists. If anything, this verbal mosaic was ascetic enough in character to satisfy the conscience of a hermit of the Thebaid. St. Anthony of the Desert and St. Simeon of the Pillar would have approved of its preachment. It was a protracted outcry against the tyranny of the flesh, a homily exhorting chastity, a savage depiction of the terrors of lust. It was also, it must be admitted, the product of adolescence and black coffee, inexperience and a rush of words.

It was Hecht's first book in point of composition even if it was his third in point of publication, and, like the mother and the first child, he regarded it with a special affection. Over its metaphors and its similes, its extravagant rhetoric and cacophonous cadence he had spent interminable nights in the fever of inspiration. Into it went the sublimates of an intense and vital physical organism, a febrile and delicate sensibility. I had heard him read parts of it in manuscript with emotion and with the satisfaction of a creator in the work he has produced. It did not seem to mean very much, as I recall hearing it read, and I was put to extreme concentration in my fruitless endeavors to connect one of those brilliant passages with another; but it sounded wonderful and, with words so daringly used and observations so heterodox and metaphors so outlandish, it was easy for me to applaud this reading, spontaneously, as something extraordinary and, therefore, most probably great. Since those days (that was six years ago) I have lost some of my enthusiasm for words as words; I am getting old enough to require of them that they shall have sense as well as sound, meaning as well as color.

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If I mistake not, Hecht is suffering from these same consequences of senescence, for the books he has written since he made the first draft of "Fantasius Mallare" are less rich in pure harmonics, less patterned and more explicit; it is no feat at all to make both head and tail of them; they are, in a word, books of ideas and artistry, revealing genius at happy compromise with mundane understanding.

To return from these divigations, the ill-advised and somewhat unintelligent thing Hecht did was to write a preface to what might otherwise have passed as an interesting, harmless, literary curiosity, the significant product of a talented man's immaturity. The preface, of course, was written long after the matter it prefaced. It was as forthright and direct as a political pamphlet, and it was rather more hysterical than pamphlet tirades have a way of being. It was a gratuitous and calculated insult to every one under the sun who might entertain opinions different from those of the author, especially in regard to the profound genius revealed in the context to follow. Most of the words of monosyllabic succinctness and nakedness which civilized society has covenanted not to use in print were dragged into this preface with a defiant bravado. It was an outburst ill-natured, violent, nasty, vulgar, obscene—and, I think, quite idiotic. In it Hecht anticipated his own arrest and defiance of the law; in it he baited the jury or the judge which was to try him; in it he assumed the rôle of a superior and insolent culprit doing his best to convict himself by blinding his judges with revenge and rage. This was, of course, very childish of him, and it would be difficult to condone it if we did not remember that an aspect of childishness is an attribute of genius.

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When I received that telegram last night, then, there ended an anxiety which had attacked me intermittently for over a year. What, I had asked myself, will it do to Hecht's spirit if he is remanded to the Federal prison at Leavenworth for a long term in consequence of a moment of puerile braggadoccio? The effect of the arrest and prosecution already had been bad, I thought, on his morale; it had turned a literary artist into a polemicist and had diverted the energy which might have gone into fine novels into the futile protests of a malcontent. His writings in the paper which he had founded for the expression of his views, *The Chicago Literary Times*, had become mostly ill-natured and derisory; there was no tolerance or urbanity in them. This was, surely, a throwing away of gifts which, though still in need of careful cultivation, had shown themselves to be in "Erik Dorn" and "Gargoyles" and "A Thousand and One Afternoons in Chicago" very rare and precious and a credit to American letters.

That Hecht was let off so easily is in itself amazing and a tribute to the forbearance and intelligence of the Federal judiciary in Chicago; for, while the prosecution was being drawn up there was not a moment when the charges would not have been dropped and the whole matter hushed up if Hecht had not done everything possible to prejudice the Federal authorities against him. A group of Hecht's friends, newspaper men (without Hecht's knowledge, to be sure), had gone to the authorities at one stage in the development in the case, pleaded in his behalf, saying that Hecht was a decent and honorable fellow innocent of wrongdoing (which he certainly is), and that he had a wife and child to support out of his earnings as a journalist, and that Hecht would

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be careful not to offend again if he were let off. The dignitary was melted by this plea and agreed that if Hecht would write a note of confession and apology the case would be squelched. When he heard of it Hecht sent word to the dignitary telling him to go chase himself. Again Hecht struck the attitude of defiance which he undoubtedly conceived to be Olympian.

The gesture must have become limp when the trial actually came up, for both Hecht and Smith entered a plea of *nolo contendere*, thus throwing themselves upon the mercy of the court. It is just possible that Hecht hoped for a prison sentence in order to emulate the career of Voltaire, and expected to compose during his enforced leisure a magnitude of books, poems, satirical pamphlets, plays and other varieties of literature.

At all events, Hecht did not follow out the plan which he once outlined to me whereby he would put an end to censorship activities. At that time he planned deliberately to write a book which would turn the Comstocks white with shock. Perhaps that preface was the outcome of this intention. He meant to get himself entangled with the law and his book suppressed; then he would bank on the American respect for property and earning power, and, contending that his character had been sullied by the suit, his income jeopardized and his literary reputation clouded by the charges, he would immediately bring a libel suit against the Comstocks, as he said, "for a million dollars." He had in mind, of course, the Society for the Suppression of Vice, of which John S. Sumner is the head, a semi-private organization supported by contributions and endowments, which has, strangely enough, usurped the prerogatives which are properly the affairs of state. Hecht's scheme might have

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been effective if he had fallen foul of Sumner and his organization, for Sumner is a salaried man responsible to a board for the expenditures of the society, and anything which threatened to wipe out the society's funds would doubtless give him much concern. But "Fantasius Mallare" was seized by the Federal authorities, which is a horse of another color.

The fine of \$1,000 will not give Hecht insomnia, for he has always consistently lived abreast his means, probably with the subconscious need of a money urgency to keep him at work at all. If he felt independent of money he would, very likely, never write another line. Indeed, few writers, few artists would create if they did not think they had to; meals, lodgings and future security are more often the real "inspiration" of artists than the layman thinks.



BERCOVICI AND JOE GOULD

Friday, February 15.

Konrad Bercovici and I went to luncheon to-day. Konrad hasn't had his hair or mustache trimmed since the last time I described him as looking like the figure labeled "Anarchy" in the cartoons, or the bandit in the second act of a road-company melodrama. He has bought a hat, though—three sizes too small for him. It is a fuzzy gray one and sits on top of that disordered mass of black hair as insecurely as a government label on a bottle of hootch. He is a comical, an amusing fellow, with a great deal of penetration, a wide range of interests and a romantic feeling about life which he is able to communicate to you, no matter what subject he happens to be talking about.

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He is writing a book called "Around the World in New York," describing the foreign quarters of the city and the customs which prevail in them. He is full of dry facts and figures as well as glamorous ones.

New York, he told me to my great surprise (remembering Chicago), has the largest negro population of any city in the world. The Greeks have quite superseded the Italians in the shoe-shining, fruit, candy and restaurant business; and, although the quick-lunch trade is pretty much in the hands of the Greeks, if any one wants a really good meal at a ridiculously low price he should go into the Greek quarter, where the Greeks themselves eat. The early Dutch settlers of New York, he told me, made specific provisions against the settlement of Jews and Catholics, and, just as most of their wishes were disregarded, the city became very strongly Catholic and Jewish.

He asked me if I knew Joe Gould; and, of course, I do—Joe Gould, the press agent for the Republic of Albania. Joe has written a history of the world which Matthew Josephson assures me is to be serialized in *Broom*. Joe's history promises to be unique, because he conceives history (rationally) as a series of events radiating from himself. He is especially fortunate as a historian in that he can give us the evidence of an eye witness to ancient and remote events, because he is a believer in reincarnation. I disremember whether he was Cassius or Brutus on the occasion of the assassination of Cæsar, but of all events he can rehearse the scene unequivocally; and if any scholar is in doubt about certain phases of Alexander's career let him consult Alexander's spirit, which now moves about in Joe Gould's body. The phrase "moves about" is exact: almost any day Joe Gould may be encountered in Greenwich Village—moving. He has an

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armload of books so large that he has to peer around the side of them to see where he is going, and on top of these books is placed, as a tantalus to the caprice of the wind, his hat. These are his worldly possessions; but in that amazing egg-shaped head of his, from which long, dry, silver hairs wave sparsely but courageously, there teem great, glorious worlds of information and ideas. He knows more about Albania than do all the Albanians. He knows the history and ethnology of Abyssinia backward and forward. It is hard to believe there is as much to know about the American Indians as he knows about them. I once gave him a small book about the American Indians to review, and he brought me back enough manuscript to fill three complete editions of *The Sunday Tribune*. I especially honor him because, unlike most reviewers, he has never dogged me with inquiries as to why I never run it. He had had his say, which was considerable, about the book, the author and the subject, and there for him the matter ended. He is a sublime and benevolent soul, patient, benign, wise, courteous and just. Were he to tell me that the spirit of Buddha dwells within his breast I would have no difficulty in believing him.



FIRST MEETING WITH WILLA CATHER

Tuesday, February 18.

I met Miss Willa Cather for the first time to-day at lunch with Thomas Beer. She impressed me at once as a remarkable woman, in a way I had so far from expected that I was some time in orientating myself to

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her personality and so getting my ease. She is full-blooded, vigorous, substantial, sure of herself, matter-of-fact, businesslike, and somehow I had expected her to be reticent, uncommunicative, rather sweet and softish. She looks as though she might conduct a great law practice or a successful dairy farm, superintend a telephone exchange or run a magazine with equal efficiency, ideas and energy.

The first thing I heard her say concerned matters of a practical nature. She said that she refused to autograph books sent to her for the quite legitimate reason that lately her publisher is bringing out limited autographed editions of her work, and for her to autograph books sent to her would cut in on his business. One bookseller had had the nerve, she said, to send her twenty-five books to autograph for sale, but she sent them back with promptitude and gave him a bit of her mind. She is fond of the table and she discourses with gusto on food; she knows where the best meals are to be had in Paris, London and New York; she taxies uptown frequently from Bank Street to eat at a restaurant where the food is so good that she told Beer, who had never been there: "Young man, the next time I see you I want you to have been at Voisin's"; she sent back her chicken pie, reminding the waiter curtly that it was insufficient in sauce and that it is not to be eaten dry. She is free from the usual inhibitions to comfortable and easy discourse; she uses good, colloquial and pungent words. I could have embraced her with joy and admiration when she exclaimed, the moment a certain academic critic's name was mentioned, "Oh, that mutton-head!" That is, in my opinion, precisely what he is, and no one had ever said it before. She is brief, decisive

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and sharp in her criticism of writers and of people. When Beer said he had been called to task for not mentioning Octave Thanet in his book and said he had not read her, Miss Cather replied, "There's no reason why you should; she was a carpenter. Her stories are well-nailed, uninteresting goods boxes."



MME. STRINDBERG AND THE WIVES OF GENIUSES

Thursday, February 21.

Mme. Frieda Strindberg, widow of August Strindberg, Swedish novelist and playwright, whose "Spook Sonata" is being produced by the Provincetown Players, came in to see me the other day to take issue with me on the thesis I advanced in a little buffoonery in a recent issue of *The Bookman*, wherein I observed that wives of geniuses suffer a long martyrdom and pleaded for a re-valuation, on a more equable basis of truth and common sense, of the rôles played in history by such women as Xanthippe, wife of Socrates; Faustine, wife of Marcus Aurelius, and so on.

These women, I suggested, had suffered at the hands of male historians; for, it certainly was enough to give a woman of Xanthippe's industry a vixenish temper to be tied up to what was, after all, the town bum, whom she had to support by taking in washing. And who with a judicious turn of mind would not see some justification in Faustine's occasionally breaking out and painting the town red when one remembers that she was married to the sort of fellow who could begin a book by solemnly enumerating his many virtues and telling where and how

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he acquired them? Geniuses, I suggested, are usually self-centered and irritable, and, if they are worth their salt, they value nothing in the world as of half the importance as the marks they make with ink on paper, and so are quite likely to be something less than perfect as husbands.

Mme. Strindberg gave me a new light on the matter, and (as I told her) if, after living with that gifted madman, August Strindberg, she was disposed to contradict my thesis, there was nothing left for me to do but acknowledge my arguments to be a pack of nonsense.

Her testimony was to the effect that life with a genius may be hell, but it is interesting, and that to any woman of spirit a tumultuous but interesting life is preferable to a quiet but dull one.

"I know," she told me, "because I have been married to both kinds of husbands—to a genius and to a respectable, hard-working, bourgeois noodle. The only serious drawback about being the wife of a genius has to do with money—geniuses rarely have it, and when they have it they don't seem to be able to keep it. You speak of geniuses being sulky and bad tempered, but those are male attributes; they are not copyrighted by genius. Your commonplace business man sulks and flies off the handle over trifles, too. Strindberg was as considerate, orderly, neat and companionable as any man I ever knew. He was punctual and conscientious about his work, at his desk as regularly and uninterruptedly as any business man. He was not an angel to live with—no man is—but he was stimulating and interesting, courteous and sensitive to the little nuances which make life between men and women agreeable."

I told her that I had imagined, from what I had heard

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and read, that in his personal life Strindberg was something of an amalgam of a Berserk and a maniac, and that I had pictured him throwing inkstands and paper weights at his wives, breaking up furniture, cursing and raging at any interruption of his inspiration, and kicking the cook downstairs.

"We had no cook," said Mme. Strindberg quietly. "Strindberg flared up once in a while, but then I did, too, so the honors were about even."



ANOTHER GLIMPSE OF WILLA CATHER

Friday, February 22.

Hazel joined me at the office, and we went to Miss Willa Cather's for tea. Over her fireplace I observed with interest a large framed engraving of George Sand, with a small cutting, portraying Sand in a top hat, sliced from a periodical and stuck in the corner; and this I found significant. Miss Cather talked mostly of Suzanne Lenglen, the tennis champion, whom she greatly admires, and said that, though she is not, in the American sense, a good sport and does not take even the promise of defeat easily, she is a magnetic and enchanting figure, playing not at all on beef and muscle, but on nerves.

I asked her if it was permissible to talk about her books, when I found that she and Hazel had been discussing "The Song of the Lark," and when she said there was no objection, I asked her if I was right, so far as her own artistic intention was concerned, in saying that the story of "The Lost Lady" had to do entirely with Mrs. Forrester and not with the disillusion of the young chap who fell in love with her. She said,

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of course, it was; that in order to portray Mrs. Forrester it was necessary to show her as she was reflected in the minds of a number of men; the young man who was disillusioned was no more necessary to the portrait than the butcher boy who brought the flowers at the time of Forrester's death, but he was more directly connected with Mrs. Forrester's career than the butcher boy, and therefore he figured more importantly in the story.



BOB CHANLER

Saturday, March 1.

To a party with Hazel to-night at Louise Hellstrom's, where we found release from our anxiety and had a good time. Bob Chanler was there, and the Ernest Boyds, Mary Blair, Edmund Wilson, Ben de Casseres and his wife; Louis Sherwin, T. R. Smith, Fornaro, the artist; Dukelsky, the composer; James Watts, the female impersonator; Samuel Hoffenstein, and a great number of actors and actresses who came late and whose names I did not hear.

Chanler is an astounding character—huge, with a head massive as a bull's, topped by crinkling white hair, each separate wiry strand of which seems to wind into innumerable curls. He wears horn-rimmed glasses which rest near the end of a large, spatulate nose and whose prongs are caught high above his ears, in his hair. He has an impediment in his speech, and when he talks he usually overcomes it by raising a voice of such Jovian profundity and resonance that one might easily imagine it would crumble the walls of Jericho if Chanler put his best efforts into it. He screws his face up into exceedingly comi-

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cal expressions, like a child, thrusting out his chin and pursing the lips of a mouth wide enough to swallow half a custard pie without breaking the crust. He is truly Rabelaisian, naturally and without pose. He will sit for hours, silent, without moving a muscle except to swing his head slowly, like a searchlight sweeping the room, and then all of a sudden he will get interested or excited about something and flap his arms like a rooster and say, maybe, "Tee-dee, tee-dee, tee-dee, tee-dee." If you are from Harvard or any other college and he knows about it, and if you say something he disagrees with you about, he will say, "Aw, Harvard, Harvard, Harvard. Bah, Harvard. Tee-dee." If he is having a party at his house, he is just as likely as not to go to bed at 10 and sleep two hours and then wake up refreshed and intent on protracting the party until morning or even all the next day; or, quite as likely, he will get an inspiration to work, lock himself up in his studio while the party is going on and work for hours at a stretch. His screens are of such marvelous beauty that I believe they will be as greatly treasured centuries later as any art of our time.



DRAMATIC CRITICISM AND BABIES

Friday, March 4.

Hazel and I went to the Ernest Boyds for dinner. Otto and Bernardine Liveright were there and Pat Kearney and Dwight Taylor came up later. Bernardine said that she wished that more dramatic critics would criticize plays "from the neck up instead of from the neck down," and we all applauded the mot, but secretly I felt that the

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trouble might often lie in the criticism both of plays and of books with the tendency to criticize only from the neck up or only from the neck down, i.e., to offer criticism which does not embrace the heart and viscera or which embraces only one or the other of these two. A criticism which comes from the heart and mind in proper balance and which is not too unmindful that certain biological functions obtain—ah, that is the perfect criticism. But who has ever attained it? Aristotle? The old boy was guilty of many stupidities, among which was his curious conviction that the theater of his time had fallen upon evil, degenerate and commercial days and that in earlier times there was never any such compromise with the taste of the galleries. Mind you, Aristotle was writing when the plays of Euripides and Sophocles still held the boards and when that Menander whose Greek was “like a rivulet of oil, noiselessly running,” according to Plato, was in high favor as a playwright. If you don’t believe it, I refer you to Barrett Clarke’s scholarly compilation of the dramatic opinions expressed through the ages, a book which I reviewed some years ago under the heading, “The Drama Is Not What It Used To Be and Never Was.” Charlie Collins, of *The Chicago Evening Post*, was considerably put out by my review because, in reading Clarke’s book, he had been struck by the same thing I had and had written a piece (with a head not quite so good as mine) and had had to kill about two galleys of type because they duplicated some of my own selection of quotations from Aristotle, Horace, Boileau, Corneille, Jonson, Dryden, Milton, Sainte-Beuve and Lemaître, all voicing the old lament that the theater is now in the hands of money hogs and morons and that playwrights no longer have any intellectual integrity.

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From Boyd's we went to Halle Schaffner's and found there Major Rupert Hughes, Col. and Mrs. Robert Montgomery, Kate Spoenle, Dr. and Mrs. Smith Ely-Jelliffe, T. R. Smith and Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Muschenheim. Major Hughes and I got in a conversation about the anxiety of parents over the illness of children and he told me the plot of one of Vance Thompson's stories which, he said, was one of the most beautiful and most powerful stories ever written and which seemed to me, as he retold it, to possess great dramatic power. "I saw Vance shortly after I had read that story," said Major Hughes, "and I told him how strongly I had been affected by it. He said, 'Yes, my sick baby stories have been very much admired.' Now, Vance Thompson was not as callous as all that. Just talking for effect. Afraid to show any sentiment." And I was reminded of the story Mary Fanton Roberts told me about the occasion of her first meeting May Sinclair. Mrs. Roberts had wept over a particularly poignant story of a little gamin by May Sinclair, and when she had a chance to talk to the authoress she said: "To have written such a beautiful and heart-rending story, Miss Sinclair, you must have a great and consuming love for little children, haven't you?" "No," replied Miss Sinclair, "I can't abide the pestiferous, dirty little brats." And I was reminded, too, that Bob Peattie had told me that if there was anything Eugene Field couldn't stand it was children. This same Eugene Field who wrote "Little Boy Blue" and so many lyrics for and about children. . . . Still, I believe it is possible to have both a literary and an emotional attachment for children.



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SANDBURG ON THE MOVIES

Friday, March 11.

Carl Sandburg's peasant-like deficiency in a critical sense causes him to see analogies where they do not exist. And by drawing analogies that were unflattering he used to infuriate Sherwood Anderson. When Sandburg was given the sinecure as motion picture critic for the Chicago *Daily News* (that kindly orphanage for so much literary talent) he soon began to take the movies with a heavy seriousness. He saw in them the modern substitute for folk tales, heroic legends and *chansons de geste* (which, in a way, they are). This led him to see in them much more than there is. He would encounter Sherwood Anderson on the street and say, with his slow, ponderous, drawling bass: "I have just seen a real, typical, sure-enough Sherwood Anderson movie. It was real Winesburg, Ohio, stuff. It had guts to it and the breath of the sage country breezed through it. It was Bill Hart in ———." And he would mention some terrible title like "Hearts Astray," whereupon Anderson's lips would quiver. He would say nothing, for he loves "Old Carl" with a profound affection.



ANATOLE FRANCE AS CRITIC

Thursday, March 20.

Bernard Miall has translated and Dodd, Mead & Co. have published the fourth volume in the series containing the best of the informal papers "On Life and Letters" which Anatole France contributed weekly to the Paris

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Temps from 1888 to 1892. Although he was forty-four years old when he took up his post as literary critic for the *Temps*, France had only just begun the career which has made him almost universally recognized as the greatest literary figure of his time. He was then still in his imitative and formative period. He had recently published two books of first rate importance, "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard" and "My Friend's Book," but his great work lay ahead of him. His collection of severely chiseled Parnassian poems written when he was an ardent disciple of Leconte de Lisle, the prefaces he wrote to new editions of French masterpieces, the biographical sketches, literary studies and the fiction he tried until the time he was forty, were the products of a long apprenticeship in letters before he had determined his attitude and perfected his style.

When he began work as literary critic for the *Temps*, France's manner of expressing himself had reached the point where it was pure Renan. Hitherto he had taken life and the world of ideas with the utmost seriousness. He had filled his head, as a boy in his father's bookshop on the Quai Malaquais and as a youth on the staff of the Senate library, with a vast amount of reading; and his earlier literary essays had the cocksureness and the fervor we associate with young men. They also were somewhat academic. Renan taught him urbanity and gave him a taste for dilettantism. Montaigne, his second master, so thoroughly convinced him that one's personal feelings of the moment were the only data which one might record with any surety that France was enabled later to come off in flying colors after a battle with Brunetière on the essential merits of subjective and objective criticism. Renan had taught France urbanity, and Montaigne, with his reiterated "What do I know?" and with his answer to all

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things, "Perhaps," had taught France skepticism. After this it was not difficult for France to announce that (so far as he was concerned) criticism was "the adventures of a soul among masterpieces" and that when he was writing about Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe or Pascal, he wanted his readers to understand that he was writing about himself apropos of these masters. He disarmed his critics utterly and endeared himself to the hearts of men when he added, "The occasion at least is excellent enough."

When France began to write for the *Temps* he became immediately conscious that he was writing for a large audience with whom he had, perforce, to be extremely tactful if he was to hold his job and not alienate his readers. The urbanity he had learned from Renan and the skepticism he had acquired from Montaigne stood him in good stead. He adopted a formula which was an amalgam of Renan and Montaigne whereby he might, if he wished, convey to the more subtle of his readers that the work of the author he was discussing was trash and the author himself an idiot, and to the more obtuse of his readers that the work was a masterpiece and the author a compendium of wisdom and the virtues. Thus he satisfied everybody (or, rather, most people and not everybody, as I shall later point out), held his job and said pretty much what he wanted to say. It is a formula I should recommend to every one who writes for the public, but it also is a formula which I should be hard put to if called upon to describe. First of all, it is an attitude of false humility, an insinuating attitude of mind, a way of worming one's self into another's confidence and respect. It is the reverse of the Olympian and dictatorial attitude, although it is often Olympian and dictatorial. It is the effort to reach the hearts of men and women on the plane of a universally

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shared sentiment. And that plane is most advantageously and expeditiously reached if the ascent is facilitated with a little unction.

France is not without unction of the most creditable and intelligent sort. It is the quality in him which gives all his work that charm which pleases all who read him, even his adversaries and antagonists. It is a rarefied and heavenly tolerance. It is a deliberate shutting of the eyes to imperfections, ignorance and stupidity in order to contemplate the important fact that we are all really ignorant human beings, here for a brief while, consumed more or less with curiosity and fated to die before we have really learned anything.

That is the sort of mind that makes friends, but it is not the sort of mind which succeeds in more than being amiable in the world. Progress, or, rather, that change we designate as progress, is achieved by fanatics. France, for all his urbanity and dilettantism, contains something deeply imbedded in him which is fanatical. It is a form of idealism which persists in spite of his inveterate mockery, his cynicism and his clear-eyed view of reality. He would like to make the world a better place to live in, even if it means to readopt some of the ideals which have been outlived. For himself he has a special fancy for the eighteenth century, and prefers it to the nineteenth, in which he takes it as a misfortune that he has had to live. This is a romantic sentimentalism on his part which we find hard to reconcile with his public career as a Socialist and Dreyfusard, an anti-royalist and anti-clerical; for the eighteenth century was the century when the principles of equality and democracy were most in abeyance and when culture was the privilege and the exercise of the very few at the expense of the toil of the many.

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No one, so far as I know, has traced with proper patience and application the development of France as a writer. This is all the more curious in that France has himself exposed, even talked of, that development with entire candor. Most writers who have chosen France as a subject have remarked on his indebtedness to Renan and Montaigne—a very obvious indebtedness which France has been scrupulously paying off with interest by beautiful tributes to these masters.

What I have in mind especially is his indebtedness to Heine. I have a suspicion that his acquaintance with Heine began during or after the period of his tenancy on the *Temps*, and from his acquaintance with Heine, I believe, date his great satirical books "Penguin Island," "The Queen Pedauque," "The Revolt of the Angels" and the books in the series of "Histoire Contemporaine." I shall tell you why I think so. In the first place, he has acknowledged in his later work a very obvious indebtedness to Heine, the most Aristophanic of the spirits of the nineteenth century, the most cultivated, sensitive and sardonic of all German writers. Any one reading the fourth volume of "On Life and Letters" will realize that France, after four years, had run the formula he had acquired from Renan into the ground; that compromise and urbane complaisancy had become a stereotype with him, and that without new mental fertilization he was in danger of becoming a rubber stamp, a very beautiful, graceful, impressive rubber stamp, but a rubber stamp none the less. It was agreeable to his readers and to himself to begin by asserting that some one was a "good," "pious," "worthy," "unselfish" soul and then proceed obliquely to make him out neither good nor pious, neither worthy nor unselfish; indeed, to mock at him and still embrace him with a human

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sympathy and with a benign implication that we are all ignoramuses, and that, therefore, the superior men stand essentially on the same low plane as the inferior men. But after France had been nearly four years at it, it began to get tedious. You know too far in advance what to expect. It is all too much a reiterated, well bred monotone. The pungent thoughts, the shrewd comments, the delightful observations have begun to come out as subordinate and casual reflections, almost surreptitiously, as if they were the bastard children of respectable platitudes. The pleasure to be had from the fourth volume of "On Life and Letters" is only to be had when France forgets that he must be amiable and considerate in the presence of a very mixed audience. It still remains the sort of thing which no other critic has ever approached in sweetness of temper, depth of information, breadth of cultivation and serenity of mind, but it shows the imprint of a formula which, persisted in, would have ruined France for further creative effort.

Heine, I feel sure, set him off on another track. He did not lose what Renan and Montaigne had taught him, and he never deserted the clarity, simplicity, directness and ironic crystallization of a thought which he had learned from Renan, and his fidelity to Montaigne never let him forget that his own personaity in all its trivial and profound aspects, all its activities and emotions, is the only proper medium through which to judge of life itself. However, I am sure that Heine fanned the dying embers of fanaticism in him, and called him to the service of satire and critical irony. A Heinesque bitterness and acid intolerance, though urbane and sweetened, comes into the two books which were to follow that "Thaïs" which was written under the Flaubertian influence, much as if Renan

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and Montaigne had collaborated upon another "Temptation of St. Anthony." I refer to "The Queen Pedauque" and "The Opinions of M. Jérôme Coignard."

Meanwhile, it is instructive to us who write for the papers to consider the career of Anatole France as literary reviewer for a Paris newspaper. He was the most tactful, the most considerate, the best informed, the gentlest, the best endowed man who has ever held such a job. And yet he had his difficulties. He sacrificed much to expediency, he deliberately adopted a tone of humility, he rarely criticized adversely or distributed blame, he wrote for the most part about books he had a special liking for, and he took care not to touch upon topics where his opinions might start a controversy. And yet he was continually in hot water. The sincerity of his praise concerning no man is so convincing as that of his praise of Calmann-Levy, the editor of the *Temps*, who hired him to write these pieces, and who retained him as critic through all the envious and dissatisfied clamoring for his hide.

None of us now reading the piece he wrote for the *Temps* about Leconte de Lisle on the occasion of that poet's election to the Academy would be struck by anything except the magnificent humor and the critical justness of it. We should not feel that Leconte de Lisle had been maligned or belittled, but that a pompous and very limited poet who was very popular at the time had been very fairly estimated and had been tendered much more consideration than we should now feel was necessary. It was possibly in bad taste (as people without any taste whatever employ that term) and it was certainly irreverent; but it was also one of the most delicious bits of characterization that it has ever been my pleasure to read. France knew his man intimately; indeed, he had enter-

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tained a certain reverence for him and had been a disciple of his in his youth, and this article was written with a heavy trace of that affectionate sentiment we feel toward people we have come to know and love very well without failing to take cognizance of their weaknesses. But, none the less, that article caused France and his employer considerable annoyance. It evoked a public retort and all sorts of subscribers to the *Temps* wrote in to tell the editor that if he didn't get rid of this smart aleck France they would cancel their subscriptions to the paper. Even financial and political considerations were brought to bear, but M. Calmann-Levy was wise enough as a business man and publisher to know that he would gain rather than lose by retaining a writer who was read with so much attention.

Cultivate his public as he might with good humored tolerance, deference and smiling courtesy, France did not escape censure, Lewis Galantière, in his Paris Letter, records another instance of France's difficulties. M. Descaves, piqued by the fact that France had failed to consider his work worthy of a week's article, protested that France gave no consideration whatever as a literary critic to the work of contemporaries, and that in the same week that Huysmans's "Là Bas" was published France elected to discuss the writings of a man long dead. Descaves lied, for France was in the habit of discussing the work of contemporaries whose work interested him. He wrote about and criticized the novels of Paul Bourget, Guy de Maupassant, Gyp, Maurice Barrès, the Goncourt brothers, Pierre Loti, even Marcel Proust. On the occasion of new editions of their work he wrote about Flaubert, Balzac, Hugo, Gautier, Verlaine. He used the new works of serious scholarship for points of departure in beautiful and pertinent speculations of his own. And he did not

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omit to give his analyses and opinions concerning the work of the Symbolists whose poetic aims were far removed from what his own had been—Charles Le Goffic, Jean Moréas, the popular balladists and the cabaret versifiers. He left Descaves and his ephemera to the other reviewers, and wisely ordained that Descaves should survive in men's memory largely by virtue of his having protested against Anatole France. This is a negative sort of immortality, like that of being registered under the Bertillon system, but M. France, remembering that Ephialtes, who traitorously led the Persians over the secret approach to Athens, and that ignoble person who set fire to the library of Alexandria, would not be insensitive to the irony of it.

Among France's deficiencies as a critic must be counted his indifference to and his patronizing attitude toward the Symbolists. This led him to a complete dismissal, except for a review involving the medieval Latinists of Remy de Gourmont, the only writer of France's time in France whom France might have counted among his intellectual peers. They were both Epicureans and skeptics and possibly this may account for their attitude toward each other (for, after all, they were human); still, in France's elaborately deferential preface to the second volume of "On Life and Letters," I divine, I believe, a man who is a little too sure of his popular support and who feels that he can be at once delightful and arrogant without seeming to be so. It was rather petty of him deliberately (as I believe he did) to misspell Rimbaud's name and to refer to him with an Olympian condescension as Raimbault; to align Rimbaud and Ghil (whose name he also misspelled), and then to make out that both Ghil and Rimbaud (and by inference all their followers, including Verlaine and Moréas) were victims of a physical and mental malady of

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interest to pathologists, and that, by inference, their work was of no interest to the readers of literature. These two instances—his denigration of the Symbolists and his ignoring of Gourmont—are the only ones I can discover wherein France used his position to advantages which were personal or which appear to be so. That is exceedingly rare, and if you will read Anatole France you will see how rare it is; for no one so accurately and so honestly as he has endeavored to expose the motives of other men with so much understanding good humor and sympathy.



LUCK VS. ACUMEN IN BUSINESS

Saturday, March 29.

With Hazel to the Ralph Block's to-night, Ernest and Madelaine Boyd came and we had a very fine dinner and talked until nearly two o'clock. We argued most of the evening about the elements which count for financial success in America, I holding that a very high degree of intelligence in certain directions is necessary. Boyd thought that mere chance counted for more than anything else, and Block was somewhat inclined to agree with him. Many instances were cited on both sides; but I maintained that even in the cases where chance favored a man's success, unless there is a combination of circumstances like inherited wealth, position and influence, financial success depends upon the exercise of a peculiarly shrewd intelligence. Sometimes it is a very narrow intelligence, but sometimes that is all the more favorable because it limits the function of intelligence to concentration on and persistence in one or two things. In the modern realistic novels

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of American life I know that there has been often depicted a man who has risen to wealth and power without knowing just how he acquired them. A man organizes a little business venture of his own and very soon it has grown out of all proportion to his highest dreams and he finds himself the head of a great organization of whose ramifications he is ignorant, because he has given over the superintendency of departments to deputies as fast as the business has grown. But that is not, I think, the whole story. It does not take into account the initiative which resulted in the venture and the shrewdness which kept it growing. Dreiser better than any one else, I think, has shown how important this intelligence I speak of is, how it is actually highly intelligent (for the purposes of the aim in view) even when it appears to be unintelligent.



A GLIMPSE OF GLENWAY WESCOTT

Thursday, April 3.

At work all day in the office, cleaning up my correspondence, clearing my desk of manuscript, reading snatches of this and that, listening to callers and so on, then to Ernest Boyd's with Hazel in the evening. There I found Ralph and Mrs. Block, Herbert and Jean Wright Gorman, Otto and Bernadine Liveright and Louis Greene. Greene brought Boyd the advance proofs on Elliot Paul's new novel, "Imperturb." Before Glenway Wescott arrived, they teased me a great deal about my loquacity and said that Wescott would out-talk me; though, if I am loquacious I do not know it, for I thought I was

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one of those strong, silent men. When Wescott came there was a long ominous silence until some one said to him, "We are just waiting for you and Burton to begin." Wescott began with what I thought a superb and concise, though unflattering, description of me as I appeared six years ago when, as a youth, cherishing ambitions to write, he had come to me for advice. I warmed the cockles of his heart, he said, with my patience, cordiality and sympathy; and I called the others to witness that I had some good points. Wescott has an exceptional talent in conversation for visualizing a person or a place, and Madelaine said that Wescott's novel, which ran in the *Dial* recently, gave her the impression more than any other modern American novel, that the author had his roots in the soil. We talked about the comic strips and Wescott likes some which I can find no fun or interest in at all, although for one of these, "The Gumps," my young son has an enthusiasm equal to Wescott's and Ezra Pound's. Gorman, Boyd and I gratify a taste for the burlesque shows now and then, liking especially the National Winter Garden shows in Houston Street. We talked of these matters very lightly, however, for we have not Gilbert Seldes' high seriousness about the importance of the "Seven Lively Arts." I was greatly surprised on reading the advance copy of that book, by the way, to discover that there ever had been a "sacred moment in our cultural development," and I was the more surprised when I learned what that moment was. "The historic meeting with Little Jeff, a sacred moment in our cultural development," writes Mr. Seldes in his æsthetic interpretation of Bud Fisher, "occurred during the days before one of Jim Jeffries's fights. It was as Mr. Mutt passed the asylum walls that a stranger confided to the air the

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notable remark that he himself was Jeffries. Mutt rescued the little gentleman and named him Jeff. In gratitude Jeff daily submits to indignities which might otherwise seem intolerable."



REMINISCENCES OF GEORG BRANDES

Thursday, April 10.

Ivan Oppfer, the caricaturist, who has been living in Europe for the past two years, came in to see me the other day, bearing with him a great portfolio of his impressions of famous Europeans. There were sketches of D'Annunzio, Mussolini, Clemenceau, Poincaré, Nansen, Sven Hedin, Bernard Shaw, Maximilian Harden and a dozen others, but none of them interested me so much as his study of that great old warrior in the field of letters, Georg Brandes, the famous Danish critic. It had been ten years since I had seen Brandes and much water had flowed over the mill meanwhile. The outbreak of the war, its duration and its aftermath had been a catastrophe which had broken the grand old man, made him crabbed, querulous, bitter and pessimistic—he who in his seventies had been so buoyant, serene and vigorous of intellect.

I had just been rereading, in a new edition, Brandes's six volume history of "The Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature," a work I find unfailingly fascinating, as surely the work of a great creative imagination as Balzac's "Comédie Humaine," and all the more sure to remain as permanent a source of satisfaction and instruction as any literary work of its period by reason of the

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fact that it is a work of great critical and analytical scholarship about real instead of fictional characters—about the dominant literary figures of the nineteenth century romantic reaction against the dry classicism and philosophic rationalism of the eighteenth century.

Oppfer's caricature, which was published in a Copenhagen newspaper, displeased Brandes very much, for he is very vain, especially in regard to his personal appearance. The caricature shows a noble head, with magnificent features; there is force and a beauty in that face, even if, with senescence, the mouth has sunken in and an assertive chin seems almost to meet an equally assertive nose, and beneath those eyes which have read so many books, there are wrinkled bags like the breasts on Rodin's "Old Courtesan." Oppfer had gone to Brandes's flat in Copenhagen and had sketched him among the critic's vast accumulation of books, which line the walls to the ceiling of every room, in single, double, and even triple rows.

A world of younger men in literature and in politics in Denmark has grown away from the ideas of the nineteenth century which engrossed Brandes and, in consequence, the grand old man is thrown in upon himself, with only his pessimistic reflections to sustain his amour-propre in an irreverent world which forgets the great work of the old man's prime and ridicules or ignores his efforts to claim their attention. One source of infinite satisfaction to him now is the vast amount of mail he receives daily from admirers and colleagues from all over the world. He points to these with the same sort of pride in which a younger man might slap himself on the chest in virile assertion of his independence.

Oppfer made the mistake on the occasion when his

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attention was brought by Brandes to these letters of saying something about the great number of letters another eminent man he had recently sketched was in the habit of receiving. Brandes became immediately jealous and exclaimed, "But he doesn't receive as much mail as I! With every post the letters come to me in basketfuls. I receive more letters than any other writer, more letters than a sovereign, more letters than a philanthropist."

When the caricature by Oppfer was published, Brandes wrote to the editor protesting that it was a misrepresentation of his appearance, and he refused to permit Oppfer to come again to his house to make amends with a more flattering likeness.

I spent an evening with Brandes in Chicago ten years ago which I shall never forget. It was during his first and only visit to America. It was a lecture tour which was not a disappointment financially, for everywhere crowds turned out to see him and filled the halls where he spoke; but culturally it was rather a disaster.

Although Brandes had written one of the great books in critical interpretation of Shakespeare and had dealt with keen insight and sympathetic understanding concerning various English writers, he had relied upon his knowledge of written English and six months' practice of spoken English to suffice for the purpose of lecturing in English. Of course, they did not suffice, and he was almost wholly unintelligible to the Scandinavians who came expecting to hear him speak in Dano-Norwegian and to the others who came expecting him to speak in English. To unintelligibility he added inaudibility, for his voice did not carry beyond the sixth or eighth rows of the vast halls in which he spoke. The patience and the attentive silence of the audience on the occasion when he lectured

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in Orchestra Hall—no one protested against his English or his faulty voice—was one of the most magnificent tributes I have ever witnessed. Understanding nothing, but remembering that here was before them a man who had written one of the great records of the human mind and who had been the first to champion Ibsen and Nietzsche and to introduce Anatole France outside of France, they waited until he had concluded his mumblings and then tendered him such a demonstration of applause that one might have thought they had just listened to and comprehended a new set of Tables from Sinai. They mobbed him and carried him from the hall with embraces of affection and shouts of veneration. He was very happy, but at that moment he was also very hungry, for I was standing close beside him while he kept exclaiming to the welcoming committee of Danes that he was starving.

That evening C. Atonson and other thoughtful spirits in the Danish-American association arranged a little treat for the distinguished critic. There was then in Chicago a famous beer-garden on the North Side, called, until the war, the Bismarck Gardens, where food, wine and beer, all of a rare excellence, was to be had, and in addition there was a uniquely American cabaret entertainment, with saucy chorus girls in colorful, glittering but extremely scanty costumes who came down from the stage during the refrain of a song and mingled with the guests in playful and tantalizing intimacy. Mr. Atonson had been good enough to invite me to this party.

I had remarked, from my first sight of Brandes, that somewhat to my surprise he was not the Viking-like sort of man I had imagined he was from his pictures—it was his massive head which deceived me—but a stockily built little man, some inches below medium height. He had a

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thick shock of silky white hair, parted in the middle and reached back carefully. He wore a frock coat, gray striped trousers, a soft felt hat, highly polished, very small shoes, stiff-bosomed shirt with a wing collar, a wide black bow tie and a gorgeous waist coat of blue and gold brocade.

"The young are always radical," said Mr. Atonson shortly after I arrived at the table and had asked something about the charge of radicalism which had been laid against the critic, "the young are always radical and Dr. Brandes is seventy-three years young."

"And I am eternal," added Brandes, with a twinkling look which was at once both that of audacity and of complete sincerity of conviction.

The wine was having a very desirable effect. I was the only young man in the party, and probably because of my obvious attitude of drinking in his every word as though it sprang from an oracle, he addressed the following little homily to me:

"Celebrity is nothing. Youth is everything. I would give all my fame in a twinkling for your youth. Let's drink to your youth. May the wells of it never dry up. . . . What is fame? A nuisance. Admirers of my writings and interviewers are a pestilence that sweeps upon me, a famous man, everywhere I go. I am nauseated with the opinions these interviewers thrust into my mouth. What I say in jest is taken in earnest; what I say in earnest is taken in jest—or more frequently passed unnoticed. It was Renan who said that human imbecility was the only thing which ever gave him an idea of the extent of infinity. He must have been thinking especially of reporters.

"I have wine before me which is a temptation to gods

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and men. But this moment you require me to be serious. You ask me what is the literary future of this cosmopolitan country. I am not a prophet; but an artist contemporary with Luther painted a picture of a well in which a withered old woman bathed and became young and beautiful. This new world, I conceive, is that well in which the withered and ancient culture of Europe will be bathed and from which it will arise, fresh, young, virile, beautiful.

"Your literature is inseparable from English literature, just as the Scandinavian literatures are inseparable from one another. But as Bjørnsen, Ibsen, Strindberg and Jensen are fresh and more eagerly read by the younger generation than are the older writers, so will the fresh and vigorous new writers of this country be more eagerly read than your Irving, your Cooper and your Hawthorne.

"What is genius? On that point I differ with Taine, to whom I owe much. Genius is that force within a man which produces an epoch. Rousseau possessed that force. A genius is never a follower, never an imitator. He is ever the creator of an era. There have been few geniuses; the world has progressed but little.

"Now let us cease to be serious. There is entrancing music for us to hear. There is food and wine before us. We are surrounded by beautiful women," and here Brandes winked rather wickedly. "Do you know, when Anatole France was elected to the Academy there was a great celebration in his honor, to which France invited me. I made the first speech, because my name begins with B, and the speakers were selected in alphabetical order. France told me to bring a beautiful woman to Paris with me. I borrowed the niece of a Russian count and I astonished France, because she was very beautiful. I made him very envious."

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The disquisition concluded and the party continued to get gayer. Brandes was exhilarated and made happy by the wine and the chorus girls, who were unaware of his eminence and aware only that here was an elderly gentleman whom it was part of their nightly work to show special attention. As they passed our table, they would tweek his gray goatee and call him "Grandpop." This pleased him very much, though I have no doubt that he misunderstood the word "Grandpop" to be a term of affection with no elderly connotations; for even now, they tell me, at eighty-three Brandes has a youngish eye for a pretty girl.



TWO MEETINGS WITH W. B. YEATS

Tuesday, April 15.

I met William Butler Yeats, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature for 1923, on several occasions during his second and third visits to this country. Miss Harriet Monroe, the editor of "Poetry: A Magazine of Verse," arranged that I should meet him alone in her apartment in Class Street, Chicago; and I was a little self-conscious when I was introduced to him because I had just been reading George Moore's delightfully malicious stuff about Yeats in "Hail and Farewell," and Moore's jibes were running through my mind. This tall, stooped, very poetical (and professorial) looking man with his black hair streaked white and his beribboned glasses, however, was very gracious to me and (such was his absent-minded habit) since I had now and then to remind him by interrogations that I was there, I had no difficulty in conquering my self-consciousness. Sometimes he did not hear

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my question or heard only part of it, but when I asked him about the Moore book in which he was lampooned he said something about Moore's "jealousy" and went ahead with his monologue about the Abbey Players in Dublin which I had not asked him about at all.

They relate an anecdote of Yeats that I can easily believe which is that at a reception given for him at the University of Chicago, he soared up into the clouds again and automatically repeated to every one who came up to him, no matter with what words or questions, "So glad you like them, so glad you like them." And at a dinner given for him, he so far forgot where he was as to begin chanting some verse while a brother poet was paying an eloquent and thoughtful tribute to him, and continued so audibly and monotonously that the other poet forgot the conclusion to his talk and had to sit down in great confusion.

Still on this first occasion of my meeting him Yeats responded with what was to him a considerable discourse in reply to my question about the value of national institutes of arts and letters. "I am a member of the academic committee of such a body in England, a committee consisting of thirty men, all of them the most consequential men of letters. The business of such an institution is to set standards and to exist for the younger generation to attack. The quarrels between the academic standard bearers and the revolutionary young men bears the fruit of progress. If such an institution served only as something for the younger men to attack it would have a worthy motive for existing."

Yeats's interest in spiritism and the occult at that time was very intense and on the afternoon of his arrival in Chicago he paid a visit to a clairvoyant, about whom he

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had heard. The story of the séance was shielded from the newspapers by Miss Monroe, for Yeats was beginning to be the butt of many facetious paragraphs because of his stated belief in fairies. Like most poets, Yeats reads his own incomparably beautiful verses badly; indeed, he mangles them by reciting them in a dreary monotone, with care only for the beat of a measure.

When he was in America on his last visit, I went to lunch one day in Chicago with him and Mrs. Yeats (for he had married then) and Mary M. (Mrs. Padraic) Colum and St. John Ervine. Marriage, it seems, had cured a great deal of his absent-mindedness and he talked during that luncheon with a great deal of animated attention to the general trend of conversation.

Bernard Shaw, he said, had been terribly frightened by the bombing raids of the German aircraft over London and he confessed himself guilty of a great degree of physical cowardice. He said he had agreed with the French historian, Salomon Reinach, on a walk in the Luxembourg Gardens, that late middle age and old age is the happiest time of life, holding that youth and especially adolescence is the unhappiest period of life. He wondered how Americans continued to eat hot bread and hot rolls without ruining their stomachs, saying that Europeans would not think of eating bread so fresh from the ovens.

Mrs. Yeats, an energetic, auburn-haired, efficient-looking little woman, appeared to serve as an adequate balance of practicality in a marriage where there was so much ethereality.



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PAUL WHITEMAN'S JAZZ

Monday, April 21.

I went to the concert of American music given at Carnegie Hall to-night by Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. It was for the most part a refined and decorous affair, offering me none of the thrills I experienced when I first heard Jim Europe's band or when I heard the New York Syncopated Orchestra play under similar high-toned auspices. It put me in mind of a pop concert made up of Berlioz, Massenet and Verdi. I found myself hoping that Mr. Whiteman would not listen to too many high-brows who tell him what a great cultural influence he is, for he seems to be slipping already; and I should hate to see the Jazz King forsake his crown and take up culture in a serious way.

If Gilbert Seldes, author of "The Seven Lively Arts," was in the audience, I imagine he was made uncomfortable by one significant incident of the evening. As the third number on his program Mr. Whiteman played "The Japanese Sandman" softly, slowly, delicately, drawing out the full measure of the melody with a lulling sensuousness over the simple undulating rhythm of that pretty little trifle. That was his idea of the way the thing ought to be done. He is opposed to violent cacophony, and his success with jazz has been in the way he has moderated its noise without affecting it as a stimulant. Then he subjected the same piece to a deliberately disorganized and rackety jazz treatment to show his audience how, in his judgment, the pepping up of a melody by the original negro jazz method of every man in the orchestra for himself, and let the loudest man win, ruins an otherwise melodious composition. If he was looking for understanding of and sym-

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pathy with, his artistic ideals from a Carnegie Hall audience, he got the surprise of his life. The audience conferred upon the jazzification of "The Japanese Sandman" perhaps its most tremendous and sustained outburst of applause. If the audience had taken the trouble to read the program notes, it might have gratified Mr. Whiteman with the docile courtesy of hissing the "desecration" or otherwise showing disapproval; instead, it seemed to consider it the best number on the program, and Mr. Whiteman took his bows with a fatuous and puzzled smile on his face and with his arms swinging loosely in their shoulder sockets like a marionette's. The jazz enthusiasts in the audience were in a considerable majority over the symphony patrons, academic musicians and the disinterestedly curious, and they (the Café Royal patrons and the college boys who are learning the saxophone) let it be very clearly seen that if they don't know much about music they know what they like.

So, if Mr. Seldes is ever given to a skeptical examination of his enthusiastic conclusions he must have entertained a whole headful of doubts to-night. I am not averse from hazarding some intimations myself. One of them is that to-night's program was, musically considered, neither flesh nor fowl nor good pickled herring. It was more nearly allied to an illustrated lecture on the development of the canning industry. It began with an amazing example of old-time honka-tonk jazz as played on a tin-pan piano, a fiddle, a trombone, drum and taps, and concluded with George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," which is as unrelated to jazz as Dvorák's "New World Symphony" to "The Star-Spangled Banner." The first two pieces of the suite of four serenades, which Victor Herbert composed especially for Mr. Whiteman, are good pieces in the Schu-

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mann tradition and might fit into any program of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; the other two are jazz of sufficiently energizing qualities to set the tired cigar drummer at the Palais Royal snapping his fingers and shuffling his feet. The division in Mr. Herbert's suite presents an analogue of the program's high-brow-low-brow, low-brow-high-brow effect.

George Gershwin's much discussed "Rhapsody in Blue" is, so far as Mr. Gershwin's original piano composition is concerned, an extraordinarily ingenious and satisfying work. With a new orchestral score made for it, it ought to take its place in the symphony orchestra programs as a refreshingly indigenous musical composition. Mr. Grofé's orchestral arrangement, however, drags in trite jazz phrases and effects by the heels just often enough to remind the listener uncomfortably of Ted Lewis and his horrible tinpan antics. Mr. Gershwin's course, however, no longer lies in the direction of the low-brow arts celebrated by Mr. Seldes; his rhapsody is intellectual and intricate in design and it requires a high degree of musical training to comprehend and enjoy it.

That leads to my second intimation, which is that jazz or popular music of any sort, ragtime or sentimental ballads, i.e., any music which the masses comprehend emotionally and respond to emotionally, is one thing and the music loosely termed "classical," i.e., music which genuine music lovers comprehend both intellectually and emotionally, is something else; that popular music may (and usually does) draw thematic material from classical music and that classical music may (and usually does) draw thematic material from popular music; but that popular music and classical music perform two disparate and individual functions; and that to try to make them meet the

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same needs is, to say the least, an incongruous proceeding.

Mr. Seldes's efforts to persuade people to give jazz profound intellectual consideration, if successful, will mean, I think, the death of jazz. That may or may not be a good thing, according to the way one looks at it. But if jazz dies of an overdose of æsthetics, something else will take its place in answer to the demand of the populace for a form of music to which it can give an immediate physical response. For that reason I sided to-night with the people who applauded so roundly and spontaneously when Mr. Whiteman jazzed up "The Japanese Sandman" and when he steinached the opening bars of the spavined old war-horse, the "Oh, My Gawd" prelude, Americanized the melody of "Song of the Volga Boatmen," and played in his inimitable fashion "Yes, We Have No Bananas."

I confess that in order to tolerate a whole evening of such noise I should require a half dozen cocktails beneath my belt and be out to kick up my heels a little. On the other hand, twice as many cocktails would not prevent Beethoven's Fifth Symphony from spoiling my evening if I were out to dance around and forget my troubles. I'm for keeping the two things apart.



MORLEY'S NEGLECT OF COLBY

Monday, May 5.

Christopher Morley has made a charming selection for his "Modern Essays: Second Series" (Harcourt), though both in this book and in the first one he has omitted to include a selection from the work of the man I consider probably the wittiest and most graceful, the most culti-

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vated and best informed of all living essayists—Frank M. Colby. I return often to “Imaginary Obligations,” “Constrained Attitudes,” and “The Margin of Hesitation” and emerge always with a feeling of having communed with a great and chastened spirit, one steeped in the humanities and profoundly versed in the complexities of human character; and I cannot understand how any one who loves essays as Morley loves them can neglect that modern Montaigne who is the editor of the “International Encyclopedia” and of “The Statesman’s Year Book.”



MENCKEN ON EATING AND YODELERS

Wednesday, May 21.

To Philip Goodman’s in the evening, where came also Dr. Paul de Kruif, author of “Our Medicine Men” and collaborator with Sinclair Lewis on “Dr. Martin Arrow-smith”; Elmer Rice, the author of “On Trial”; H. L. Mencken, Theodore Dreiser and Ernest Boyd. W. C. Fields, the comedian, came in after the show. Sinclair Lewis was to come—he returned from England day before yesterday—but he was exhausted from the parties in his honor and had had to go to bed. Dr. de Kruif is a hulking fellow, with a neck like a wrestler. He wears, he tells me, a No. 18 collar, half a size less than Goodman’s, who needs a large neck; he is such a Gargantuan eater.

There was much talk of eating, and Mencken and Dr. de Kruif matched strange edibles they had found delectable until they sounded like a couple of Munchausens. Then Mencken began to describe the Bavarian *bierstuben* which used to flourish in all the large cities of America, and

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where whole families, grandmamas, children and all, gathered around tables, ate cheese sandwiches and drank beer and listened to the zither player and the Swiss yodelers. He began to describe the costumes and appearance of the yodelers minutely, and while he was describing the woman yodeler of the troop, Goodman interrupted with, "Did she have a goiter?"

"Of course she had a goiter. How could she yodel if she didn't have a goiter?"

There was talk of Hasenclaver and the German expressionists between Boyd and Rice; Dreiser kept rolling up his handkerchief and letting it unfurl again, trying very hard now and then with some jibe to get Mencken's goat, and altogether having much more fun than I have ever seen him have before; and Mencken took it all, as ever, with roystering good humor. Mencken agreed that Ring Lardner's "How to Write Short Stories" is superb, probably the best book of short stories written by an American since Poe and Hawthorne. Mencken allowed that "Say what you will, fellows, the greatest living poet is Kipling," and Dreiser chimed in, "And he wasn't such a slob as a short-story writer. What about his Indian stories, and what about 'Kim'? Where do you find fiction any better?" And so it went until midnight, when a very excellent supper was served and Fields entertained us with anecdotes until tears of laughter streamed down Dreiser's cheeks.



A GREAT HUMANIST

Thursday, May 22.

I read to-day Professor Lane Cooper's "Two Views of Education," or rather part of it, for I haven't finished

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reading it; and the impression deepens, after my having read his book on "The Poetics of Aristotle," that American literature is being deprived of a valuable influence and perhaps of critical leadership in the determination of this great humanist and brilliant writer to occupy himself largely with classical research and with the question of education. He is a true humanist in a way in which Professors More and Babbitt are not; he follows the example of that Aristotle to whom they are frequent in referring by maintaining an inquiring attitude, by seeking the truth rather than assuming the knowledge of all truths; and by refraining from querulous dogmatism. Professor Cooper's creed for the humanist is one which he exemplifies in his work:

"What, now, is the aim of literary study? Since literature is a *liberal* art, its function must be in some way connected with *liberty*; that is, more thoughtful, more reverent and more fearless—more wise, sympathetic and just. As a liberal art poetry helps to free us from the slavery of fear; as a humane art it disentangles us from the bestial part of our natures and renders us more like the best and happiest, the most typical men."

Compare that attitude with the humanism of Professor Babbitt in his new book, "Democracy and Leadership":

"Whatever democracy may be theoretically, one is sometimes tempted to define it practically as standardized and commercialized melodrama."

"It is even less sensible, perhaps, to indict a whole century than it is, according to Burke to indict a whole people." . . . Still, this does not deter Professor Babbitt: "I am attacking not the nineteenth century in general but the naturalistic nineteenth century and its prolongation

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into the twentieth century, along with the tendencies in the previous centuries, from the Renaissance down, that prepared the way for naturalism."

That second pronouncement sounds suspiciously like paranoia. I do not mean that there are not, as I see them, many excellent things in Professor Babbitt's "Democracy and Leadership," many vigorous strictures against destructive tendencies; indeed, there are several points on which Professors Cooper and Babbitt are in agreement, but Professor Babbitt seems to me to vitiate his thesis by frequent contradictions, elaborate generalizations from debatable premises, and especially by out Canute-ing Canute. Canute merely commanded the waves to stand back, while Professor Babbitt commands the waves of democracy to stand back after it has already flowed over and inundated the likes of him for more than a century.

It is refreshing to find Professor Babbitt a vigorous opponent of prohibition. He says that the piling up of prohibitive legislation is evidence of our increasing lawlessness, due to democracy's insane reliance upon the outer compulsion instead of on the inner check. Curiously enough, he does not see the contradiction on the very page where he makes this assertion. He had just recorded that pre-war militaristic Germany made this outer compulsion so dominant that the word "Verboten" was ubiquitous. Unless he is prepared to say that the Kaiser and the Junkers ruled a democracy democratically, I cannot lay our dependence upon the outer compulsion to the fact of our democracy.

Professor Cooper is, if anything, a more thorough believer in self-discipline than Professor Babbitt; he believes in thorough and accurate scholarship; he would limit all collegiate instruction to men who have acquired their

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doctorate degrees by important and arduous research in the branch of learning they profess to teach; he sets up humility and an inquiring mind as the first requirements of a teacher—humility in the face of constantly acquired knowledge; and he would drastically reduce the annual output of reading matter by requiring writers to keep silent until they have something to say. But his program, which maintains a marvelous consistency throughout the separate essays in this book, leads toward the freedom of the spirit and the multiplication of the pleasures of the mind.

His chapter on the teaching of Greek and Latin is revolutionary and sensible. The decay of the study of the Greek and Latin classics, he says, is due entirely to the teachers of Latin and Greek, to their methods of instruction, their wrong choice of such dull writers as Cæsar and Xenophon for beginners and their putting grammar above literature. He advocates the reading in class of good translations of interesting works, preferably with inter-linear texts. If necessary, he says, omit the study of syntax and the learning of paradigms altogether.



LARDNER AND FITZGERALD

Monday, May 26.

To lunch with A. Donald Douglas and Edmund Wilson. Douglas was lamenting the death of E. Nesbit, the writer of children's stories, whom Americans, he said, are always confusing with Evelyn Nesbit but who was really quite another sort of person altogether.

We talked about Ring Lardner's stories, and Wilson thought that both the title, "How to Write Short Stories,"

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and the Dada preface and nonsense descriptions of them were ill-advised and out of key with the fine artistic seriousness of the stories themselves. Lardner has a gift for pure nonsense, and he has written two or three things which probably are the highest achievement of Dadaism, certainly the highest achievement in America.

Wilson said that F. Scott Fitzgerald mispronounces more words than any educated person he knows, and that when Fitzgerald is with Lardner, Lardner is always correcting Fitzgerald's pronunciation but that Fitzgerald never remembers the correct pronunciation from one moment to the next.

It was Fitzgerald, however, according to Wilson, who persuaded Lardner to collect the stories into a volume which go to make up "How to Write Short Stories."



BERTRAND RUSSELL AS A PERSON

Friday, May 30.

Hazel and I were at lunch to-day with Captain William Rainey Rinehart, when Horace Liveright came into the restaurant trailing Bertrand Russell, Horace M. Kallen, Dr. Sheffer and T. R. Smith. Liveright asked me over to their table, and I sat watching and listening to Mr. Russell, a thin, wiry man, a little below medium height, with a hatchet face, furrowed cheeks, a Scot's complexion, and a heavy shock of white hair. He looks a little like Henry Ford. He has a quizzical smile and an alert look of intense curiosity. He has a fund of anecdotes and tells them well. One was about Lytton Strachey. Russell had gone to a lodging house in the country where Strachey had put up several weeks previously. The landlady, in

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telling Mr. Russell of Strachey, said that when Strachey first came she thought he was a tramp, he looked so disreputable. "I discovered later," said the landlady, "that he was a gentleman—though an odd one."

Mr. Russell went to an appointment, promising to come back in an hour, which he did. Meanwhile we went to Liveright's office, and Liveright called up a number of people and a party was on. Theodore Dreiser, Edna Ferber, Dagmar Godowski, Bernardine Szold and a lot of others came.

It fascinated me to see Mr. Russell, the great mathematician, philosopher, logician, author of a book on the atom and lecturer on such recondite subjects as relativity, dancing very well and gayly and having a most playful time. He flirted not a little, if I mistake not; and he was very amiable and human. I recalled a sentence Dr. Kallen had spoken of him in the afternoon: "He has made remarkable progress considering that he did not discover human nature until 1914."

Dr. Kallen had said that when I remarked about the absence of Freudian references in Mr. Russell's work. He explained that Mr. Russell's psychological concepts had been formed before the Freudians appeared on the scene, and that he had probably been unwilling to overthrow these concepts in favor of new ones, so long as the old ones remained serviceable.

I perked up my ears when I heard Dr. Kallen say that Dr. Sheffer is "the Einstein of logic. When he gets out his book on logic the others will go into the scrap-heap," for there was before me a very mild little man, with a huge head covered with sandy hair, a chunky little man, with wide but absurdly small feet, who was going to do all this. He is a special lecturer in the department of

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philosophy at Harvard, and he said deprecatingly that Dr. Kallen was a windy buffoon, but Dr. Kallen was serious, and I had in intimation that Dr. Kallen was right.

Miss Edna Ferber came and we had a tiff over a trifle; and Theodore Dreiser came and engaged Mr. Russell in a discussion of serious matters, and I wondered whether Dreiser had asked Mr. Russell why he didn't say something in the article in the *Nation's* series, "New Morals for Old"—it was all so nebulous, nothing concrete; it was a question I wanted to ask him, but I knew that Dreiser would be the only one who would have the nerve to do it. Mr. Russell seemed to be relieved to get back to the dance floor, and Dreiser left before I had a chance to ask him what great thoughts he had extracted from the philosopher.

The best, the most reliable, access to the thoughts of a philosophical writer is through his books. In conversation with him and by observing his response to his surroundings, it is possible to get an idea, or at least a set of impressions, more or less reliable, about his personality and the factors determining his character; but these aspects of the man reveal only the machinery of his thought; the thought itself is in his books.



RING LARDNER AT HOME

Sunday, June 1.

It was a good thing I didn't read the papers this morning, because if I had I should have been uncomfortably self-conscious at the Ring Lardners' this afternoon. Lardner had written a piece in the *American* suggesting to people who live in the country, various ways and means of preventing city residents from descending on them like

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locusts on Saturdays and Sundays and eating them out of house and home. One young author—referring presumably to F. Scott Fitzgerald—Lardner said, had fled to Europe because people seemed to think his home in Great Neck was a roadhouse.

I didn't know about Lardner's piece until Gene Buck told me about it around midnight and it was too late to worry about it then. Besides, when I called Lardner up this morning and told him Hazel and I wouldn't be able to come out because we hadn't any one to stay with the kids, Lardner had said, "Bring them along; we've got plenty of kids to play with them."

We fixed it up with the maid, though, and went out on the train. Ring and Mrs. Lardner drove to Great Neck and took us out to their home, a beautiful place, with spacious grounds, heavily shaded by great oaks, hickories and maples, with an athletic field for the children, a tennis court, and flower and vegetable gardens. At the foot of the hill, on the slope of which the house stands, is the neck of an inlet with the Sound and Port Washington visible from the porch.

Lardner is looking very robust again after a period of ill-health and he told me he had put on twenty-four pounds by cutting out tobacco. He is about six feet in height, perhaps a little over. His complexion is swarthy and he looks like the classical type of American Indian, except for his eyes, which are very large and round and shaded by long black lashes. His chin is rounded and prominent, his cheek bones are high, and his forehead slopes back to a protuberant obelion region of the cranium in such a fashion as to give his head the appearance of an ellipse with the major axis extending from his chin to the

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crown of his head. It is a head which would delight Brancusi the sculptor.

When Lardner talks, which he does very slowly and quietly, he throws his head back, raises his eyebrows, blinks, sways his chin a little from side to side, stares at you for a brief instant and then stares away from you. His comments are brief and mostly sardonic.

I have never met any one who seems to know human nature as well as Lardner, or who seems to see the essential truth of a situation so clearly. He is not, apparently, taken in by anything. There is no bunk about him or in his point of view; no crowd-thinking, delusions or self-deceptions. From his habit of preserving an unusual degree of intellectual autonomy one might expect a trace of cynicism in him. There is none. He is ironic, but his is good-humored irony which becomes bitter only as the truth he has to tell is bitter, as in his story "Champion."

I can see no pronounced satirical bent in him, for satire presupposes a reformatory temper and requires a special sort of emphasis, whereas, though Lardner sometimes achieves satire by implication, the intention, as I see it, is to present a veristic account as in "The Facts" or "The Golden Honeymoon." That is why I think Seldes misunderstands Lardner's genius when he suggests that Lardner go to school to Mr. Dooley. Their artistic aims are dissimilar, Mr. Dooley (or Dunne) is a commentator and Lardner is a character creator.

Lardner doesn't "make" conversation and he is so averse from pointless chatter that he often indulges a singular capacity for reducing what passes for thinking to an absurdity by dissociating ideas and images completely and arranging them in new, illogical and totally unrelated sequence. This results in the craziest and most comical

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nonsense. Several of these mental exercises have circulated privately, and one of them, "The Tridget of Greva," a gorgeous bizarrerie, was put on with ill success by the "Forty-niners." At one performance of the skit I heard one of Lardner's brothers in the profession of humor say seriously of "The Tridget of Greva," "It doesn't make sense. I don't see what it is all about," which remark, considering that the skit was almost pure nonsense, was like saying of the Gettysburg Address that it is a bad sonnet because the whistle doesn't blow.

Another of those nonsense bits, done, I think, for an Authors' League dinner and called, as I remember, "The Hay Lifters," was even funnier.

Lardner's study of the American idiom has been careful and exact. He points out the mistake Sherwood Anderson made in his excellent story, "I'm a Fool," of having the narrator tell the story part of the time as though he were writing it. There is a difference here, as there is in every language, between the spoken and the written methods of expression, though in this case the difference is so subtle that it would probably escape the attention of a less careful student than Lardner.

Edmund Wilson observed at lunch the other day that Lardner usually writes about people who have neuroses as psychopathic as those of the figures in a Russian novel, but because they are familiar American neuroses, they excite laughter rather than horror or compassion. Lardner's baseball players, the Busher and Alibi Ike, and the nut in "My Roomy" are egocentric victims of manias and delusions, and the Champion is a sadist and a complete moral moron—or, in the phraseology of the psychiatric clinics, a case of dementia præcox hyperphrenia. The expression of the dementia of the Champion sentimentally

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exploited made a hero of him in the eyes of a public which refuses to accept the truth about a popular god. An expression of the same dementia through other channels results in murders like that of the Loeb-Leopold-Franks case.

Lardner's range is wide. "The Facts" is magnificently sardonic: a romance wherein we are shown at one and the same time that the illusion and the reality of a rather awful situation are destroyed by the accident of two old friends meeting and getting drunk. Then there is that tender, pathetic comedy of futility, "The Golden Honeymoon," a masterpiece of implications. As I said to Lardner this afternoon, "How to Write Short Stories," even if he writes no more, is to be counted among the important contributions to contemporary literature; but I hope he will continue to produce a considerable body of work as fine. I gathered from him that the possibility of comparatively low financial rewards for short stories of the character of those in this book was a discouragement and a deterrent—a possibility which I hope will not be permanent.

Mrs. Powell, Herbert Swope's mother-in-law, came over and chatted for a while very quaintly and delightfully about her dynamic son-in-law and how she gets the best of him; and then we went up to the athletic field where the four Lardner boys were having their supper in a tent; and I wondered when I saw the trapeze whether I was still able to swing by my heels and by my toes and do other stunts I used to do when I was a kid, and I tried and found I could, most of them, but I shall probably be sore to-morrow for having done so.

Lardner's second son, later on, after getting ready for bed, was reading a Boy Scout story and when I asked him

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what book he liked best he thought a minute and said, "Ivanhoe."

We went to a roadhouse for dinner and thence to Gene Buck's house where we talked and danced and Lardner and Hazel played the piano until after one o'clock. Mr. Buck has a vast collection of autographed photographs of friends in the musical and theatrical profession and in the political world—people like President Coolidge, the late Victor Herbert and Florenz Ziegfeld. He said that in his opinion the President has the hardest and most thankless job in the world; he had been down to Washington a great deal recently with Victor Herbert trying to protect the song writers in the matter of royalties from radio broadcasters and he found the President harassed by wire-pullers, schemers, lobbyists and hand-shakers. He also told us an interesting story about the practices of comedians in the theft of gags, and how one comedian always sent his wife to the vaudeville and burlesque theaters of the town he was playing in to take down gags that brought the best laughs and the next night he would work them into his own patter, until one time he wrecked his own act, failing four times to take his cue because he saw the originator of the gag which was to follow the cue sitting in the front row, ready to leap upon the stage and punch him in the nose.

When Hazel and I got in town it was after two. Soup and sandwiches in a restaurant and a taxi home, with me very sleepy and tired and wishing I had been less voluble and had listened more.



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ELLIS, WHITEHEAD AND HEMINGWAY

Thursday, June 5.

Seward Collins returned to-day after a year's illness in California and Hazel and I went to dinner with him. The book which had become his Bible, he said, was Havelock Ellis's "The Dance of Life," a book which I agree with him is one of the most beautiful prose works of modern times. We were talking of books when Edmund Wilson joined us and told us about Whitehead, the English mathematician who is coming to America soon and who is Bertrand Russell's only peer, Wilson said, in the field of mathematics. Whitehead has written an "Introduction to Mathematics," it seems, wherein he has controverted Einstein, saying that Einstein had made a great discovery in relativity but had corrupted it by a metaphysical philosophy. Wilson came back to the house with us and we sat up until after midnight talking.

One of the writers we discussed was Ernest Hemingway, a young American resident of Paris, who has published two books, one of thumb-nail short stories called "In Our Time" and the other entitled, "Three Stories and Ten Poems." They are prose experiments, showing the influence of both Ring Lardner and Sherwood Anderson, with here and there a sentence or a paragraph of genuine power. The pieces in "In Our Time" are concisely dramatic and carry implications which start the reader's imagination. Here is a sample:

At 2 o'clock in the morning two Hungarians got into a cigar store at Fifteenth Street and Grand Avenue. Drevitts and Boyle drove up from the Fifteenth Street police station in a Ford. The Hungarians were backing their wagon out of an alley. Boyle shot one off the seat of

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the wagon and one out of the wagon box. Drevitts got frightened when he found they were both dead. "Hell, Jimmy," he said, "you oughtn't to have done it. There's liable to be a hell of a lot of trouble."

"They're crooks, ain't they?" said Boyle. "They're wops, ain't they? Who the hell is going to make any trouble?"

"That's all right maybe this time," said Drevitts, "but how did you know they were wops when you bumped them?"

"Wops," said Boyle, "I can tell wops a mile off."

This tendency toward brevity and concision is a pronounced one in modern literature.



A QUESTION OF SLANG

Monday, June 9.

The difference between the slang in George Ade's fables and the slang in Ring Lardner's stories is that Ade's slang is invented and hence is largely peculiar to himself, while Lardner's is a native growth in the American language and hence is part of the national idiom. Ade's slang tends to die day by day, as soon as its smart, amusing novelty wears off, whereas the slang Lardner employs tends to pass, through general currency, into academic acceptance by the dictionaries.



HENRY JAMES AND STARK YOUNG

Thursday, June 12.

In the "Letters of Henry James," two volumes edited by Percy Lubbock (Scribner), there is a letter from James

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to Mrs. G. W. Prothero about "the delightful young man from Texas" who had appealed to Mrs. Prothero for guidance in the study of Henry James's novels. James gave these two lists:

1. "Roderick Hudson."
2. "The Portrait of a Lady."
3. "The Princess Casamassima."
4. "The Wings of the Dove."
5. "The Golden Bowl."

and

1. "The Americans."
2. "The Tragic Muse."
3. "The Wings of the Dove."
4. "The Ambassadors."
5. "The Golden Bowl."

James explained that the second list was "the more advanced." The delightful young man from Texas was Stark Young, now dramatic critic on *The New Republic*.

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DANIEL DREW

Although I have been hearing about Bouck White's "The Book of Daniel Drew" for several years, I have just read it for the first time in the handy format of the Murray Hill Library. It is an authentic American classic, a masterpiece of creative imagination which could not have been produced in any other country. I do not know to what extent White depended upon personal documents in writing these imaginative memoirs of a real and notorious figure in American finance during the Reconstruction era, but whether he had much data or none he has nevertheless created a character that is remarkably vivid and

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significant. The book is of the type of Daniel Defoe's "Moll Flanders" and Octave Mirabeau's "Le Journal d'une femme de chambre." The humor is intentionally unintentional on the part of the fictional narrator; he is permitted to satirize himself by revealing himself, and to play a highly ironical part without being aware of it. White has so successfully identified himself with the purported author of the memoirs that only rarely does he step out of character and make it apparent how much he despised the unconscious hypocrite Drew was and how much he loathed the system that produced Drew. "Uncle Dan" Drew was a shrewd, miserly, merciless, pious New England Yankee, who was the embodiment of the Puritan virtues. He was a strict Protestant; he was personally chaste and ascetic, looking upon all forms of sensual pleasure, from music to drinking, with horror, as evils which would bring those who yielded to them eternal punishment in lakes of brimstone; he practiced the Puritan precepts of thrift, industry, intelligent self-interest, simple living and fear of God; he supported the Church, gave to charity and endowed a theological seminary. Nevertheless, he was a cruel, double-dealing, vain, ignoble, evil man—without knowing it. He was magnificent in his spiritual barrenness and his implicit faith in the externals of Protestantism. He led a mean, petty, money-grubbing existence, with not as much color to it as the life of a shell-game operator, to whose methods his own might be likened. Yet White has made him in many ways a sympathetic figure by making him thoroughly human. In this book White has done for a peculiarly American situation and for a period in our national development what Anatole France did on a greater scale in the "Histoire contemporaine." He has not only created a character, but has

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given that character a mode of expression which is natural and inevitable in that character and which reveals him as the language of "The Old Soak's History of the World" reveals Clem Hawley and the idiom of Ring Lardner's "You Know Me, Al," stories reveals the Busher, or as the style of the "Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin" reveals Benjamin Franklin.

Daniel Drew, after a spectacular career in Wall Street, in which his two rivals, Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, sometimes combined against him and sometimes combined with Drew against each other, was finally caught in a coup wherein Gould outwitted him and he ended in bankruptcy and died in poverty. White is as successful in making Gould and Fisk live in these pages as he is with Drew.



FORD M. FORD AND GILDA'S ALBINO MONKEY

Friday, June 13.

Ford Madox (Hueffer) Ford, collaborator with Joseph Conrad on "Romance," former editor of *The English Review*, a distinguished poet, novelist, essayist and author of two charming books of memoirs, came to lunch with me to-day. He changed his name to Ford during the war. Although he is nearly sixty, he served in France, where he was so badly gassed that he was not able to do any literary work until recently, when he finished a novel which has had an enthusiastic press in England. He is now editing *The Transatlantic Review*, a magazine which I find unfailingly entertaining. It is modernistic, fresh and high spirited, and in reading it I am amazed at Ford's mental resiliency and receptivity, by which he keeps abreast of his

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time in three countries and brings a sympathetic appreciation to new work of merit among the younger experimenters.

This perception enabled him to make *The English Review* the distinguished periodical it was during the period when Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad and G. K. Chesterton were just ascending to the heights they have now achieved.

Ford is a tall and bulky man, well over six feet in height, with a semicircular profile and a face like Manet's portrait of George Moore, only fuller. He has a reddish complexion, light sandy hair and a wispy, straw-colored mustache, irregularly trimmed. His voice has been affected by his being gassed, and he speaks slowly and sometimes almost inaudibly.

He told me that he had come to America for a fortnight or so on business in connection with his magazine. He related an unusual experience. Some one had given him a card to a certain club, and by mistake he had gone into another club, across the street. He displayed his card at the desk and it was unchallenged. Every courtesy was extended him; he ate there regularly, made use of the library and lounge and ran up quite a bill. Then one morning he sat down to write a letter and noticed that the stationery did not bear the name of the club to which he had a card, but that of another club. He asked a man sitting near him what stationery of another club was doing in that club's writing room, and the man, evidently not understanding what he said, replied, "Aw, that's all right." Ford did not learn until that afternoon, and quite by accident, that he was putting up at the wrong club. He marveled at the club's courtesy and hospitality.

Gilda Gray, the dancer, as a publicity stunt, was giving

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a luncheon in honor of the albino monkey which has recently been added to the Hippodrome Toyland, and because I had been invited and privileged to bring a guest, I asked Ford if he would like to go. He was pleased by the idea. He discovered after he got there that he had known Miss Gray's husband, Gil Boag, in Paris. He sat between Miss Gray and Ada Patterson, the interviewer, and seemed to enjoy himself greatly, though at times he looked a little bewildered.

He told me something about the late Luke Ionides, a member of a rich Greek family which has been in England for several generations. Ionides was eighty-some-odd years old when he died, and he was so pleased by the check Ford sent him for the first installment of his memoirs in *The Transatlantic Review* that he had it framed and hung over his desk. Ford said he was not sure whether he would vote for or against prohibition in England and France, but he said: "Prohibition in America has ruined the cafés of Paris."

Drove to the Anderson Galleries with Ford, thence to meet Hazel and take the train to New Canaan to spend the week end with Seward Collins. He lies in bed in the center of a library as long and wide as a hotel ballroom, filled with a fascinating collection of books. He takes nearly every periodical published in America, England, France, Spain and Germany and I spent hours looking through and reading parts of them this evening.

He told me something about Unamuno, the Spanish writer and scholar who has been exiled to the Canaries by the Spanish dictator. Seward went to school in Madrid with Unamuno's son; and he said that Unamuno was almost a god with the Spanish students, a little man with closely-cropped hair, and with an electric personality.

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He also told me about Gomez de la Serna, the young Spaniard who has made such a sensation in Paris lately. Serna conducts a "colyum" on the first page of a Spanish daily; which, like many of his books, is made up of curious apothegms, that appear to have sprung out of his head without any particular relation to one another. He is radical and modernistic. One of his books is a two-volume history of the café in Madrid where he holds forth of an evening with his band of disciples. He illustrates his own books very cleverly and with taste and good draftsmanship.



WHAT ARE INTELLECTUALS?

Thursday, June 19.

John H. McGinnis, who edits a lively book page in *The Dallas Morning News*, is conducting a symposium of answers to the question, "Who Are the Young Intellectuals?" and has asked me to contribute to it. Some of the answers already printed have been curious: Gertrude Atherton includes Edna St. Vincent Millay and Heywood Broun in her list; Joseph Hergesheimer, who names no names, says that "young intellectual" is vanishing already "as a fact and as a term of description," and Clement Wood identifies among the group Ford Madox Ford, who is fifty-one; Theodore Dreiser, who is fifty-three; Robert Frost, who is forty-nine; Carl Sandburg, who is forty-six; Edwin Arlington Robinson, who is fifty-three, and Gamaliel Bradford, who is sixty-one!

Mr. Wood has displayed an absolute genius for confusing terms and values in his use of an expression which

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had already been misapplied enough. Frost and Robinson are neither young nor intellectual—they are not even intellectual poets. To describe Carl Sandburg as an intellectual is about as accurate as to describe the Archbishop of Canterbury as a Mormon.

An intellectual is one whose faculties are concerned with reasoned knowledge rather than with emotion or volition. To put it succinctly an "intellectual" is one who thinks, while an "emotional" is one who feels; the former is capable of ratiocination even about the thing he feels, whereas the emotional is, characteristically, incapable of any sustained ratiocination whatever.

Sandburg is an emotional who is as innocent of intellectual processes as Henry Ford is of history; he is so devoid of an analytical faculty that he was unequal to the elementary tasks in comparison and deduction required of a movie critic for a daily newspaper. And Bradford, though he may properly be described as an intellectual, is certainly not young.

The descriptive "young intellectual" gained a fortuitous and illogical general circulation as a term of opprobrium first among the standpatters and reactionaries, and later among the intellectual camp-followers and journalistic condottières shortly after the publication of the symposium, "Civilization in the United States: An Inquiry by Thirty Americans." The editor of that volume, Harold Stearns, had referred accurately enough, in the first sentence of his introduction, to the intellectual nature of the inquiry. Moreover, it somehow became common knowledge that one of the subtitles considered by the editor and contributors was "An Inquiry by Thirty Intellectuals." That subtitle was discarded as needlessly obtrusive and so open to censure on the score of arrogance that the

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merits and demerits of the book might be ignored by its critics in favor of the more facile sarcastic by-play offered by the subtitle. This caution did not obviate the possibility it sought to remove.

Now, one of the phenomena of democratic psychology is that terms which indicate superior mental capacity become terms of reproach. These terms are among the easiest and most effective weapons in the hands of the demagogue. Indeed, if he uses these weapons with dexterity and repetition, he needs no others; for the extent of the suspicion cast upon the one who is not identified with the mob by all his habits, thoughts and endowments, is only equaled by the extent of the fear most men have of being branded with that suspicion. Even Paul Elmer More has remarked upon the extraordinary fact that whereas almost any American will not be offended if you call him a "lowbrow," and, indeed, will often take a fatuous pride in so proclaiming himself, he will become indignant, terrified, ashamed, apologetic, or deprecatory, and sometimes all four in one, if he is alluded to as a "highbrow"—as if the closer the approach to imbecility the more commendable the mental state, and the further removed from imbecility by superior faculties the more deplorable. It is a phenomenon of the natural leveling tendency, the tendency toward the middle balance, the mean, i.e., mediocrity, a tendency which has its socializing value and its stabilizing utility, but which is a tendency also to remain culturally static and to resent, even fight against the fertilization of the mind by new ideas and new combinations of ideas. The use of the term "highbrow" or "intellectual" is a species of demogoguery of a very onery sort, but because of its peculiar effectiveness upon the

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popular imagination, it will quite likely continue to be the handiest stick to beat the dog with.

"Civilization in the United States" was a critical analysis in the narrow sense of fault finding; it criticized, and mostly adversely, the various cultural aspects of America. The intention of the editors and contributors was to provide an antidote to, American complaisancy, go-getter optimism, narrow cultural regimentation, state paternalism and the tendency to sacrifice all the amenities of life—the things of the mind and spirit and the factors which make for spiritual health and happiness—upon the altar of industrial expediency in propitiation of the great god Success. The book contains some essays which bore the faults of factual inaccuracies, bad documentation, emotional bias and possibly even a trace here and there of unconscious insincerity; but it was, on the whole, a significant and valuable, and I think even an effective, mental whiplash.

Now, in addition to the reproach attached to the terms "highbrow" and "intellectual" in the popular imagination, there is another term of reproach which, used in combination with either of them, is sure-fire, devastating. That is the adjective "young," which connotes immaturity—and therefore insignificance—in the minds of people who forget that the founder of the Christian religion was crucified at thirty-three years of age, that Einstein discovered relativity in his twenties and that many of the most notable contributions to civilized thought and to the cultural arts have been made by men who were young in point of years.

The editor of "Civilization in the United States" had had the effrontery to describe that book as an intellectual work, and so when the standpatters and reactionaries looked about for means whereby to lay this attempt to dis-

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rupt their complaisancy they hit upon the term "young intellectuals" as the most opprobrious epithet to be leveled against the contributors to the volume. The oldest contributor was fifty-eight and the youngest over thirty. Among the others were Katherine Anthony (forty-seven), R. H. Lowie (forty-one), J. E. Spingarn (forty-nine), H. L. Mencken (forty-four), John Macy (forty-seven), Van Wyck Brooks (thirty-eight), George Jean Nathan (forty-two), and so on. Nevertheless they were referred to as "young intellectuals," and the term obtained currency. First used as having specific reference to the men associated with that symposium, it came to be used loosely as a designation for any one not specifically identified with the standpat tradition. Thus Herbert Croly and Simeon Strunsky, Clarence Day, Jr. and Ludwig Lewisohn became "young intellectuals." All the writers in *The Dial*, *New Republic*, *Nation*, *Freeman* and *Survey* became "young intellectuals," even if they had numerous grand-children. The term widened, and for a time seemed exclusively to derogate John Farrar, John V. A. Weaver, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dorothy Speare and John Dos Passos, who are young certainly but whose attainments, though considerable, have not been conspicuously intellectual.

In answer to Mr. McGinnis's question I should say that "young intellectual" is a sarcastic term used by any person whose mind has jelled to indicate any one between the ages of fifteen and seventy-five whose mind is mobile and receptive to new ideas and impressions. The true intellectual is humble and eager in the face of knowledge; he knows that the process of learning does not end for the inquiring spirit at forty, but remains incomplete at the end of life. The gifted emotional is not the enemy of the in-

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tellectual, for he often arrives by a species of intuition at the same conclusions which the intellectual reaches through the reasoning process. Their common and very hostile enemy is the man who refuses to venture on newly charted channels of thought. At present the term might legitimately be used without derogatory implications to indicate any number of young men and women throughout the country on farms and in small towns, in libraries and in colleges, who are thinking for themselves, who are questioning all received ideas and are exercising independent judgment in matters concerning their beliefs, their tastes and their conduct. Dr. Henry Seidel Canby in his judicious answer to Mr. McGinnis wrote: "The characteristics of the younger men I know are a greater independence of thinking and more self-reliance than we older men had at their age. But I find as many conservative as radical in their general tendencies." The young we will always have with us, and some of them will be intellectual, though that does not mean they will be either radical or conservative in the usual meaning of those words. The true intellectual will be intensely conservative of the best values in thinking, even though he may be as radical in disposing of or trying to dispose of artificial values as a surgeon is of cutting off dead or corruptive tissue.

If there were a more general disposition in people to acquire new knowledge there would not be the sickening pages of sensational and meretricious rot that have been filling some of the newspapers in connection with the Loeb-Leopold-Franks murder case. These two young murderers have been described, perhaps accurately, as "young intellectuals," and their deed has been so persistently ascribed to their intellectual precocity and their unusual learning by the male and female sob writers that, so

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an intelligent Chicagoan tells me, hysteria and fear have swept Chicago, and parents everywhere may be heard saying they are going to keep their children away from books and schools and prevent them from learning anything. The cause of education, he says, has suffered so extensively by this outrageous murder that it will be a long time before parents will let their children go away to school without anguish and anxiety.

Parents would be spared this anxiety if, instead of allowing their emotions to be played upon by sensationalists, they were permitted to understand what every psychologist, sociologist and criminologist knows who is worth his salt, and that is that there is no connection whatever between criminal tendencies and intelligence or lack of it. Dr. Hermann Adler, former Illinois State criminologist and member of the board which conducted the army intelligence tests, made extensive studies of the intelligence of the men serving terms in Illinois prisons and found that the mentality of the average prisoner was considerably higher than that of the average man in the street. Special classes of criminals, including forgers, embezzlers and confidence men, showed intelligence ratings as high as the ratings of corporation directors, Federal judges, great executives, and men in specialized professions like chemistry, engineering and so on. Carl Wanderer, who was hanged in Chicago for a diabolically planned double murder and who had sustained a brilliant war record, registered astounding mental qualities in numerous rigid tests. His murderous tendency, however, had nothing to do with his intellectual keenness. If there were such a connection Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, J. B. S. Haldane, Albert Michaelson and Bernard Shaw would have been hanged for murders long ago. In a like manner educa-

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tion is no longer held by the more sensible psychologists to be a cure-all for crime and other social evils, for again the suggestion is rejected that learning or the development of intellectual qualities has any connection with criminal tendencies.



THE "KING IN YELLOW" LEGEND

Monday, June 23.

My father arrived early Saturday morning to take the children down to his farm in Oklahoma for the summer, and we have been busy showing him about town. C. Hartley Grattan, author of a brilliant study of James Russell Lowell in the May issue of *The American Mercury*, came to lunch to-day, and in the afternoon Hazel and I took him to a tea at the office of Horace Liveright. Ford Madox Ford, Hendrik Van Loon, Carl Van Vechten, T. R. Smith, Julian Messner, Jim Crowder and Konrad Bercovici (back from three months in Europe) were there, and Carroll MacComas, Madelaine Boyd and some others. Bercovici was wearing a pale green suit of fancy cut, which he said he had bought in London, though I professed to doubt it, and I asked him what he did with his new spats when he went among the gypsies. I showed him a passage in the new *Yale Review*, where, in an article on the American short story, Katherine Fullerton Gerould said: "There are for each of us certain backgrounds that we helplessly loathe—again a personal matter. Just as I cannot read any story that deals with French people trying to talk English—no, not though it should be written by a master—so I cannot read gypsy stuff (which disposes, for

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me, of Konrad Bercovici) or baseball stories or tales that depend on nautical details about jib booms and such and only Kipling can make me read about the insides of engines." I called Van Vechten's and Bercovici's attention to the fact that Mrs. Gerould reëchoes the old fallacy about the "decline of Robert W. Chambers" and says that she will "not forget, ever, or cease to be grateful for, 'The King in Yellow.'" I warrant that she hasn't read the story since it was published and does not remember anything except the title clearly. She is merely repeating the legend created, according to Van Vechten, by Percival Pollard, about the excellence of "The King in Yellow." I had seen the fallacy repeated over and over by numerous critics, and one day I decided to cease to take the story's excellence on faith and read it. It turned out to be only a fair-to-middling Sax Rohmer yarn, a very cheap and mediocre piece of manufacture.



ADORATION FOR BILLY PHELPS

Monday, June 30.

I adore Billy Phelps. If that is the wrong way to begin a discussion of a book of criticism by the Lampson Professor of English Literature at Yale University, I must plead that for purposes of review this book ("Some Makers of American Literature") has stumped me; but it has sealed my affection for the man. I can now readily see why it is that Professor Phelps is beloved by those youngsters who sit, or have sat, at his feet and who concede his deficiencies as a critic and yet champion his importance as an enthusiast of letters. He has, they will

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tell you, nothing of the pontiff of academician in him; he has not soured on his job; he hasn't the usual professorial vice of making the liveliest author seem like an embalmed cadaver; and he is so cheery, kind-hearted and good-natured in expounding his unblunted tastes in books that he can make even Archibald Marshall appear as a writer full of gusto. They learn soon enough that he, William Lyon is not Lampson Professor but dear Billy Phelps and that puts them out of their fear.

I know of no one who writes like Billy Phelps, unless it is Diogenes Laërtius. His mind hops around like a grasshopper; you never know where it is going to land next. There is no continuity or coherence (in the grammatical sense) in what he has to say. His essays are a patchwork of incredible irrelevancies. In the midst of a discussion of Emerson's idea of the Over-Soul he will suddenly be reminded that Emerson's favorite among his own poems was "The Daughter of Time" and will tell you, "I would not exchange 'The Humble-Bee' for a hundred 'Daughters of Time.'" Something seems to start him on a line of thought, but before he has developed it, he thinks of something else. To follow him in his mental processes becomes a strange and fascinating sort of game. It takes a dull and humorless person not to enjoy him. And in his essays I seem to see a new art of expression, arising as clear and distinct as James Joyce in "Ulysses." Between the uncorrelated cerebral impressions and remembrances of Leopold Bloom as he walks down a Dublin street and an essay by Billy Phelps on Emerson or Webster there is a remarkable similarity:

"He (Webster) learned self-reliance by supporting himself through Dartmouth teaching, writing, and editing a newspaper. He was graduated in 1801, and in 1901, a

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week-long centenary celebration took place, which the Dartmouth authorities have incorporated in a handsome volume—invaluable to any one interested in her greatest son.”

This management of irrelevant anti-climax, this revolutionary syntax is nothing short of a triumph of genius. A little further on in the course of this revelation of a new biographical method, Billy writes:

“He (Webster) entered Congress from Massachusetts in 1813, at the age of thirty-one. Almost immediately he became one of the most powerful members of the House, being as conspicuous for brains as he was in appearance. *No one failed to feel the impact of a new intellectual force.* His statesmanship was shown by his mastery of that most difficult of all problems—public finance. This complicated question cannot be settled by rhetoric, oratory, or sentiment; but only by profound intelligence and prolonged study. He was always for sound money—and his services can hardly be overestimated.

“It is the fashion just now to speak of Gladstone with contempt, as though he were nothing but a voice; it should be remembered, that he, like Webster, was a leading authority on public finance. This leadership comes only from cerebration.

“Meanwhile,” continues Billy in the next paragraph, “meanwhile Webster had risen to such eminence at the bar that he was universally regarded as one of the foremost lawyers in the United States.” You ask, “meanwhile what?” The answer is: while Billy is talking about Gladstone.

It is impossible not to conceive a vast affection for a man who writes such *non sequitur* paragraphs as these:

“We are fortunate enough to possess the numerous

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volumes of his (Emerson's) Journal, published not long ago, which illumined his inner life, and are full of good anecdotes. As Dr. Johnson wrote disparagingly of New Jersey, so Emerson gave a delightful opinion of Connecticut. In 1862 he met Mrs. John C. Fremont at Washington."

"The Seventh of March speech represents Webster at the zenith of his powers. It should be studied by every American boy and girl, as a text-book in preparation for intelligent citizenship. In addition to many burning questions, Webster answered for himself the question every Senator must ask himself. Is my duty primarily to my constituents, or to the United States? This is an excellent subject for debate, for 'much may be said on both sides.'

"In Anthony Trollope's little known but highly interesting novel, 'The American Senator,' he makes a slip which would betray the fact that even if we did not know the author's name, we should know that he was not an American. He invariably says Senator *for* Minnesota, instead of Senator *from* Minnesota. The little preposition displays the vast difference between the method of representation in the British House of Commons, and our National Legislature. One reason why the average is higher than here, is because they have Open Constituencies, which makes it possible to secure the best men, and insures the country against the loss of their services in the event of a local defeat. The moment any statesman in England is defeated in an election, a number of constituencies come forward, and request that he do them the honor of being their representative in the House. With us, the Senator must reside in his state, and the representative in his district. The advantages of our system are, in my judgment,

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overweighted by its drawbacks. I think it would be fine if any state or district might choose the best man, regardless of his residence; then we could have at Washington a company of the ablest men in the country, met in the best interests of the nation."

It is all like that. There are, in this book, essays on Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin, Daniel Webster and Abraham Lincoln, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Mark Twain. They are discursive essays in which the art of digression is carried to its apotheosis. Something is always reminding Billy of the story of Pat and Mike, and the story of Pat and Mike reminds him that, though he is supposed to be talking about Emerson, personally he feels sure that Robert Burton got a lot of fun out of writing "The Anatomy of Melancholy." Having recorded that impression, he indulges in an adage: "It is forever characteristic of humanity that the more serious and ambitious a person is, the more he is given to self-reproach. Consider Milton's Sonnet on his twenty-third birthday."

Even when Billy reasons, he reasons in a fashion unlike any one else: "As every one knows, Emerson was a Unitarian minister and he might have continued in that profession if it had not been for three things: he disliked all confessions of faith, he disliked preaching in the pulpit, and he particularly disliked pastoral work." This is very much as if one should say: He was a trapeze performer and he might have continued in his profession if it had not been for three things: he lost both legs in an accident, he went blind and suffered from palsy, and he became a convert of a religious cult which prohibited its adherents from having anything to do with circuses. The reasons in both cases are remarkably complete.

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Among his many other attractions as a writer, Billy Phelps has an aptitude for critical epigrams which are sure, succinct, and illuminating. Of James Fenimore Cooper he says, "he brought to the gates of immortality an enormous amount of excess baggage," which I take to be the best thing ever said about Cooper. No better differentiation of the personalities and points of view between Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin has been expressed than this: "Edwards would lie awake all night, thinking of some sin he had imagined himself guilty of committing; Franklin, after committing some gross sin, would write in his journal, 'Another erratum,' and calmly proceed with the day's work."

The essay on Emerson is really a masterpiece of hedging, wherein a sound critical sense creeps through a maze of benevolence. "In Emerson it is difficult to see the connection between any sentence and those that preceded or followed it. . . . Some one has wittily said that in Emerson's 'Essays,' 'the whole is often less than the sum of its parts.' . . . It seems almost as if some of his essays would read as well backwards as forwards; or one might begin in the middle and read either way. . . . It is natural, therefore, that there should be some lack of connection; but, as a friend suggests, although the sentences were not always connected with one another, they were all connected with God."

And that's the way I feel about Billy Phelps. Although his sentences are not always connected with one another, they are connected with God. He is not urbane, but there is no malice in him; he is not a great critic, but he is a good sort of a person to instil in youths a love for literature; he is one of those for whom the profession of

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criticism has only one attraction—the pleasure of praising. I adore Billy Phelps.



FRANK HARRIS

Saturday, July 12.

Took a train to New Canaan this afternoon to visit Seward Collins, and I found Seward reading Frank Harris's autobiography, which I told him several people had described as being only a smutty book. He denied this, saying that it was a really remarkable bit of writing, recounting an amazing career, and advised me to read it for myself, which I did forthwith. I can readily understand why the book might be described as wholly obscene by people who only skim through the book looking only for frank passages; but the bulk of the book is concerned with Harris's origins and schooling, his quest of knowledge, the books he read, and his life as an immigrant bootblack in New York, a clerk in Chicago, a cattle puncher in the Southwest and West; his working his way through college and law school in Kansas; his first visit to Paris and the awakening of his interest in literature, first through a fine sort of man who became his mental proctor in his youth and then through his own voracious reading. Harris writes English of extraordinary power and lucidity; he is a natural, untamed man; Bernard Shaw, who greatly admired him, called him a scoundrel and a monster, but admiringly. Harris lacks some of the elements of character which makes for true greatness; but he is an unusual figure in contemporary literary life—a swashbuckling picaro with a touch of genius.



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BERNARD SHAW AND ST. JOAN

Thursday, July 17.

A certain pedantic interest attaches itself to Bernard Shaw's "Saint Joan" in the matter of the departures from historical accuracy Shaw found it necessary to make, not only for reasons of dramatic expediency but also in order that his conception of Joan and of the circumstances of her trial might be portrayed consistently. For, sound as it seems and as full of common sense, Shaw's idea of Joan does not dispose, once and for all, of the mystery of the Maid of Orleans. There is still some slight reason to doubt that the Maid was the feminine Bernard Shaw of her period and that her career is a perfect analogue of Shaw's war against British stupidity.

By comparing Shaw's play with the reports of Joan's trial and rehabilitation made available by Quicherat it is rather amazing to find how infrequently Shaw departs from the historical evidence and how ingeniously he makes use of pertinent scraps of fact to build up dramatic incident and to reveal character. A good example of this is to be found in Scene VI in the little passage at arms between Cauchon and Warwick, after Joan had been consigned to the flames, without the formality of her being delivered over to the secular arm after the verdict of the ecclesiastical court had been pronounced. Historically, and in Shaw's play, the English rushed Joan away to the flames without waiting for anything more than the pronouncement of relapsed heresy. Cauchon and Warwick meet in the courtroom while Joan is being taken to the stake:

"Cauchon—There is some doubt whether your people have observed the forms of the law, my lord."

"Warwick—I am told that there is some doubt whether

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your authority runs in this city, my lord. It is not your diocese."

Warwick's counter-thrust is pertinent. The trial was, in fact, irregular, a consideration which helped materially in bringing about Joan's rehabilitation twenty-five years later. Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, claimed authority to preside at the trial on the ground that Joan was arrested within the limits of his diocese, whereas she was captured in the diocese of the Bishop of Noyan. The trial was conducted at Rouen, where the archbishopric was at the time vacant—a fact which gave the Bishop of Beauvais ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the trial. Although in a combined ecclesiastical and inquisitorial court, such as that which tried Joan, the inquisitor normally held a position of importance equal to that of the ecclesiastical judge, in the trial of Joan, Cauchon took precedence, because the judge of the Inquisition, Jean Lemaître, was only a vice-inquisitor to the Inquisitor General of France. In all this Shaw has followed the historical evidence faithfully.

However, Shaw found it dramatically expedient to have Joan's relapse, her condemnation, the communication of the sentence to her and her execution take place on the same day, indeed, within the same hour. He also found it dramatically effective to have her tear up the paper containing the recantation she had signed and by this act to bring on the verdict of relapsed heresy—the sentence of excommunication and her death at the stake.

The reports of Joan's trial published by Quicherat show that she automatically proclaimed herself a relapsed heretic in the eyes of the church by resuming male garments. The act occurred on a Sunday in her cell. Male garments had been put at her disposal, presumably as a test and

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temptation, after she had recanted and had been received into the church; for, curiously enough to modern ways of thinking, the main point urged against her in support of the heresy charge, was that she wore masculine instead of feminine garb. When she put on man's clothing after her recantation it was taken as a sign of relapse into heresy and she was condemned without further hearing. She wore the clothes on a Sunday; the next day she was condemned; on Tuesday she was notified of her sentence, and on Wednesday she was burned. When she received word of her sentence she cried out that her "Voices" had deceived her; but on the following day, when she was led to the stake she again persisted in her statement that her "Voices" were right and that they came from God. She died an unrepentant heretic, for all that legend relates that she clasped to her bosom while on the stake a cross made for her by a common soldier out of two twigs bound together. Joan's motive for resuming the male garments after her recantation has been the subject of much speculation.

Interpretation of the act depends, it seems, entirely upon the individual conception of the motives involved in the trial itself. That is, anti-clericals, like Voltaire and Anatole France, who are committed to the idea that the trial was conducted by willful persecutors willing to stoop to any meanness and subterfuge to promote their wholesale burning of heretics, are likely to subscribe to the theory that Joan was either forced to put on the male garments or treacherously induced to do so. Shaw implicitly subscribes to the theory that her relapse into heresy was a return to her original conviction that she was right and her judges wrong when she learned that, instead of being

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set free, she was to suffer life imprisonment for her recantation.

Another interesting theory is that put forth by Margaret Alice Murray, of University College, London, in her fantastic and ingeniously argued recent work, "The Witch-Cult in Western Europe"—a theory which is not invalidated by Shaw's argument and rather fits in with it. Miss Murray's contention is that Joan of Arc was a member of the Dianic cult (a survival of the ancient Druid worship), which Miss Murray claims flourished not only in Joan's time but even much later. Belonging to this cult, she says, was Gilles de Rais, Marshal of France, whom Joan chose to be her chief escort, and who served her faithfully throughout her campaigns. Gilles de Rais nine years after the death of Joan was burned as a witch and heretic and, although it took twenty-five years for Joan to be rehabilitated, Gilles was officially rehabilitated two years after his execution.

It is known that one of Joan's followers, a woman named Pieronne, was burned as a witch. Voltaire in his "Philosophical Dictionary" has this to say about the two companions of Joan, whom Miss Murray identifies with the "Voices" which Joan designated under the names, St. Catherine and St. Marguerite, and declared to be visible to her in the flesh:

"Joan underwent fourteen examinations: they are singular. She said that she saw St. Catherine and St. Marguerite at Poitiers. Doctor Beaupère asks her how she recognized the saints. She answers that it was by their way of bowing. Beaupère asks her if they are great chatterboxes. 'Go look on the register,' she says. Beaupère asks her if, when she saw St. Michael, he was naked.

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She answers: 'Do you think our Lord had nothing to clothe him with?'

"The curious will carefully observe here that Joan had long been directed with other religious women of the populace by a rogue named Richard, who performed miracles, and who taught these girls to perform them. One day he gave communion three times in succession to Joan, in honor of the Trinity. It was then the custom in matters of importance and in times of great peril. The knights had three masses said, and communicated three times when they went to seek fortune or to fight a duel. . . .

"The workers of miracles, Joan's companions, who were submissive to Richard, were named Pierrone and Catherine. Pierrone affirmed that she had seen that God appeared to her in human form as a friend to a friend. God was 'clad in a long white robe.'"

Whereas Shaw accounts for the "Voices" by reference to the instances in pathological history of auditory and visual hallucinations, Miss Murray accepts Joan's testimony that the voices were real:

"That the 'Voices' were human beings," she writes, "is very clear from Joan's own testimony: 'Those of my party know well that the Voice had been sent to me from God, they have seen and known His voice. . . . I saw him (Michael) with my bodily eyes as well as I see you.' She refused to describe 'St. Michael'; and bearing in mind some of the descriptions of the Devil in later trials, it is interesting to find that when the judges put the direct question to her as to whether 'St. Michael' came to her naked, she did not give a direct answer. Later the following dialogue took place: 'If the Devil were to put himself in the form of likeness of an angel, how would you know

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if it were a good or an evil angel?' asked the judges. Again Joan's reply was not direct: 'I should know quite well if it were St. Michael or a counterfeit.' She then stated that she had seen him many times before she knew him to be St. Michael; when a child she had seen him and been afraid at first. Pressed for a description, she said he came 'in the form of a true honest man.' The accounts of the trial prove that Joan continually received advice from the 'saints.' The person whom she called St. Catherine' was obviously in the castle and able to communicate with the prisoner; this was not difficult, for the evidence shows that there was a concealed opening between Joan's room and the next. It was in the adjoining room, close to the opening that the notaries sat down to take Joan's words when the spy Loyseleur engaged her in conversation; and it was evidently through this opening that 'St. Catherine' spoke when she awoke Joan 'without touching her,' and again when Joan could not hear distinctly what she said 'on account of the noise in the castle.' A remark of Joan's that 'she often saw them (the Voices) among the Christians, they themselves unseen,' is noteworthy for the use of the word Christian, suggesting that the Voices were of a different religion."

In fine, Miss Murray agrees with Shaw that Joan's trial was as fair and regular as any trial is likely to be and more fair and regular than most. But Miss Murray goes further and suggests, even contends, that Joan was a sorceress and a heretic, a member of the witch cult which was at war with Christianity and which worshiped God in the form of the Devil, because to the Christians the Devil was Evil Incarnate and the witch-cult members

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accepted as good anything the Christian religion held to be evil, and vice versa.

The zeal displayed by the Bishop of Beauvais and the vice-inquisitor in either bringing about Joan's disavowal of heresy or getting rid of her was dictated by a real fear of the extent and the power of the witch-cult. Other heretics and sorceresses had been dispatched to the flames with little ceremony, but Joan had captured the hearts and had inflamed the imaginations of a great many followers, especially among the soldiery, and it was necessary to proceed with caution in her case or else alienate many followers of the Church.

Heresy and sorcery in the Middle Ages, contends Miss Murray, were not mere superstitious beliefs entertained by the clerics, but patent facts and constant dangers to the Papal influence. They were survivals of the pagan cults which flourished in western Europe before the rise and spread of Christianity and flourished for several centuries among the lower orders alongside the Christian religion.

In some families certain members would profess Christianity, while others would cling to or embrace the old Dianic cult. Gilles de Rais, according to Miss Murray, was never quite able to make up his mind whether to be a member of the witch-cult or be a Christian. He was known to perform incantations and to offer up human sacrifices, was known indeed as a Devil-worshiper and was finally condemned and burned as a sorcerer; but, no less, he professed Christianity through a considerable part of his career.

Shaw is historically in error in having Gilles figure in his play as a mere fop at the Court of Charles, because Gilles was in reality an able and courageous general. He

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remained at Joan's side throughout the day when she was wounded in the assault on Paris and in other ways proved his devotion to the Maid who had petitioned the King to commission him as her chief aid and escort. That Gilles stood by and made no effort in Joan's behalf during her trial, Miss Murray explains by asserting that Gilles was convinced that Joan was a god incarnate and her death was a vicarious atonement.

"It seems incredible," she writes, "that a soldier of Gilles's character should have made no move to rescue Joan by ransom or by force when she was captured. She was not only a comrade, she was especially under his protection, and it is natural for us to think that his honor was involved. But if he regarded her as the destined victim, chosen and set apart for death as required by the religion to which both he and Joan belonged, he could do nothing but remain inactive and let her faith be consummated. If this is so, then the 'Mystery of Orleans,' of which he was the author, would be a religious play of the same class as the mystery plays of the Christians."

According to Miss Murray, it was Joan's suddenly awakened conviction that her death had been foreordained in the religion which she professed which caused her to don the male costume and thus announce her return to her former heretical faith. "There is evidence from Joan's own words," she writes, "that she felt herself divine and also that she knew her time was limited, but she never realized till the last that the end meant death; this, however, the 'Voices' knew and it was for this that they were preparing her. At the beginning of her trial, 'she said she had come from God,' and had nothing to do here, asking to be sent back to God from whom she came. . . . 'Many times she said to him (the King), I shall live barely

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a year longer. During that year let as much as possible be done.' The 'Voices' told her she would be taken before the feast of St. John, and that thus it must be, and that she must not be troubled but accept willingly and God would help her. They also said it was necessary for her to be captured: 'Receive all willingly, care not for thy martyrdom, thou shalt come at last to the kingdom of paradise.' On the fatal Tuesday when she learned her doom, flesh and spirit quailed at the prospect of the agony to come, and she cried out that her 'Voices' had deceived her, for she had thought that in her imprisonment she had already suffered the promised martyrdom. Yet within twenty-four hours she went to the stake with courage unquenched, acknowledging that her 'Voices' were from God. Like John Fian, nearly two centuries later, her spirit had sunk at first, and again like Fian she endured to the end, dying a martyr to the God who had exploited her confidence and simplicity and whom she had served so well."

There is in this version, of course, a remarkable analogy to the Passion, even to the likeness between Jesus's cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and Joan's crying that her "Voices" had deceived her. It is highly mystical and fits perhaps a little too patly into the anthropological theory of "psychic unity" and recurrences. But without doubt it is an interesting point of view, sustained with remarkable plausibility and exhaustive documentation. And it must be remembered that in "Saint Joan," and especially in the preface to the play, Shaw himself is uncharacteristically mystical; that he attacks the Rationalists and Materialists; and that he hints at strange enigmas soluble only to God—or himself.



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B. L. T.

Thursday, July 24.

Knopf has published a new collection of material from the late Bert Leston Taylor's column in *The Chicago Tribune* under the title "The East Window" and has brought out a new pocket edition of "The So-Called Human Race." Taylor will doubtless remain for some time to come the paragon of newspaper column conductors. His talent for verse, either light or serious, was not as precious as Don Marquis's or F. P. A.'s. Indeed, his gifts for versifying were inferior to two of his contributors, Pan (Keith Preston) and Riquarius (Richard Atwater), who now have columns of their own—Preston on *The Chicago Daily News* and Atwater (Riq.) on *The Chicago Evening Post*—but the universality of his appeal was more nearly complete than that of any of his rivals or successors.

Taylor's initials were known to literally hundreds of thousands throughout the country. Postal employees, even the most obscure of them, it seemed, took a special intellectual pride in recognizing those initials and in forwarding letters to him marked with no more adequate address. Having once shared an office with him, I saw letters come to his desk postmarked Butte, Mont.; St. Augustine, Fla., and Des Moines, Iowa, addressed simply to "B. L. T."—not even Chicago. Now and then some gadder making a Middle West hamlet would find a letter so marked pinned up at the post office for want of a better address and would duly inform Taylor of the fact and repair the postmaster's ignorance.

The pride which traveling salesmen and postal employees took in their familiarity with Taylor's column is

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proof of its popularity when one recalls that mail addressed to other column conductors and special writers is sometimes received in newspaper offices a year or more after the addresses have moved elsewhere. Though I never conducted a column I once wrote signed pieces regularly for *The Chicago Tribune*, and that great newspaper is obliging enough to keep track of my peregrinations and forward such letters as are still occasionally addressed to me there these four years since Chicago breathlessly awaited my oracles before making up its mind. And even local firms do not seem to be aware of the not too recent changes in *The Herald-Tribune's* dramatic and columnar departments.

The secret of Taylor's appeal was, I believe, his sense of fun—a term which I mean to embrace both wit and humor. His was a funny column. It was possible to get a laugh out of one of his paragraphs of contributions always, or at least with a higher rate of frequency than is the rule with others. He was the paragrapher par excellence, and if I mistake not he invented the caption comment which pointed the absurdity in the matter that was to follow. Two examples of the latter will suffice:

EVERYTHING CONSIDERED, THE COMMA IS THE MOST
USEFUL MARK OF PUNCTUATION

(From the *El Paso Journal*)

Professor Bone, head of the rural school department of Normal University, gave an address to the parents and teachers of Eureka, Saturday evening.

and

WHY THE MAKE-UP MAN LEFT TOWN

(From the *Grinnell Review*)

Born, April 19, to Professor and Mrs. J. P. Ryan, a daughter.

This experience suggests that simple scientific experi-

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ments performed by college students would furnish a very interesting program of entertainment in any community.

Taylor was broad in his humor, much broader than other columnists have dared to be, but having once earned the privilege of a licensed jester by a smooth-tempered showing up of human foibles, and by making the laugh in a quip more important than the abuse satirized or the evil castigated, he won condonement from the most proper and respectable for his lapses of taste.

It was almost impossible to read Taylor consistently without being annoyed or angered with him, for he ranged the whole field of human endeavor with an air of omniscience and said what was what in matters about which specialists would hesitate to appear certain. But that quality in him was curiously enough one of the chief reasons why innumerable readers regarded breakfast as incomplete without his "Lino-O'-Type or Two." He was at once stimulating and amusing; he stirred up prejudices and made people laugh; even his severest detractors opened the page each week-day morning to find something to disagree with him about and to be provoked to smiles or laughter meanwhile. He was that rare creature, a dealer in humor who had a sense of humor about himself. To illustrate what I mean I have merely to recall the indignation displayed by Marquis, Adams and Morley when Amy Lowell made them bristle like a porcupine by saying that the newspaper columns were "silly and insipid." Taylor asked them where was their sense of humor.

As a parodist I think no one this side of Rapallo was Taylor's equal. For his "East Window" and "Pipe Smoke Carry" and all his David Grayson kind of "literary" stuff about anemones and pipes, fly-fishing and nature-neighbor-

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liness I never cared, but there were a great many people who did and who loved him for that sort of writing more than for any other just as Morley's recent "How It Feels Not to Write a Column" touched many hearts and awakened many minds to a new and vivid sense of beauty and yet left me unrap-tured. Nor did I consider Taylor as wise or as roundly human as Marquis, though I thought him cleverer in all things columnar, except versification and character creation. Taylor was, perhaps, first of all a wheeze-maker, a laugh-provoker, a connoisseur of jokes and anecdotes; and to be these things requires a great talent.



THE VERSATILITY OF DEEMS TAYLOR

Sunday, July 29.

Peggy Wood, Mary Kennedy, John V. A. Weaver and Deems Taylor came over this afternoon and we went swimming. One of the first things I ever heard about Deems was when F. P. Adams told me that he could do anything in the world just as good if not a little bit better than anybody else. "He could," said Adams, "take over this column of mine to-morrow and get out a darn sight better one than I get out. He can build a better mouse-trap, write a better symphony, play a better game of tennis, or paint a better picture than his neighbor; but the world has not yet made a beaten path to his door." I wanted to see if Deems was all he was cracked up to be, so I asked him sudden like if he could turn a cartwheel, whereupon he did it as simply and as easily as if he were a tumbler at the Palace. He seems to be a well-coördinated sort of man; and he is very amusing in his banter. Weaver

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told me that he had been rewriting his play "Love 'Em and Leave 'Em," after its lack of success in the try-outs; and he has got to give it a new plot, new situations and new characters, he tells me, although he can use some of the old lines and the title. His job reminded me of the story about the tramp, who asked the good woman to "Please sew a shirt on this button."



JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD IN FRANCE

Thursday, August 14.

I have received from Paris an edition of *Vient de Paraître*, consecrated to the American author who is at present most popular with French readers—James Oliver Curwood. *Vient de Paraître* is a "revue bibliographique mensuelle courier de la vie intellectuelle et artistique." In charge of the studies in Anglo-American literature is William Aspenwall Bradley, poet and translator of Remy de Gourmont, whose wife is a favorite niece of Anatole France. There is a glamorous biography of Mr. Curwood, who, we learn, is related to Captain Marryat on his father's side, and that from his mother's side there flows in his veins the blood of a Mohawk princess. The photograph of Mr. Curwood tends to bear the biographer out in this, for he looks something like an American Indian.

M. Marc Logé, in a valuable article entitled "Pourquoi il faut lire James Oliver Curwood," points out that Mr. Curwood "peut se placer parmi ses plus illustres collègues, tels que Kipling, Jack London, Terhune, qui se sont distingués en ce genre de littérature que occupe une place importante dans les lettres anglo-américaines" and that

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"Lire Curwood, c'est véritablement respirer à pleins poumons l'air pur des grands espaces et des forêts de pins—c'est vivre quelques heures tout près de la Nature farouche, encore indomptée, à l'école de laquelle on reçoit de fortes leçons d'endurance, d'intrépidité et d'énergie, car les héros du Curwood dont plusieurs lui ressemblent étrangement, sont tous d'ardents protagonistes de cette *strenuous life*—de cette vie intrépide—dont Theodore Roosevelt fut un des fervents apôtres." Translations of Mr. Curwood's books have appeared in France under the following titles: "Les Cœurs le plus farouche," "Le Grizzly," "Bari chien-loup," "Les Chasseurs de loups," "Le piège d'or." No American author since Jack London has appealed more strongly to French readers.

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In one of his essays Arthur Machen says that any edition of a book is as valuable to him as another, and that he sets no prize on first editions or association copies, because his interest in books is wholly intrinsic. There is a certain irony in this, because Machen is one of the authors whose "items" are much sought after by first edition collectors. And now it turns out that, although William McFee's early books have been bringing premiums, he found recently that he did not possess any copies of these precious volumes. When his American publishers desired to reissue his first book of sea sketches McFee was hard pressed to locate a copy until finally his mother found one stowed away in an attic.

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So unreliable is an author's own opinion of his work, as a rule, it appears that Edna Ferber begged her publishers almost with tears in her eyes not to bring out "So

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Big" in book form after it had run as a serial. She said it would get bad reviews and that it would not sell because the general public would not be interested in the heroine. Frank N. Doubleday went ahead and took a chance on the book anyhow. He has already sold over 100,000 copies of it. This department was rash enough to predict that the book would sell enormously and also that it would be forgotten within a year, and it is rash enough to think that both predictions are as valid as such things go.



DISRESPECT FOR CICERO

Friday, August 15.

At lunch Louis Bromfield, author of "The Green Bay Tree," told me about Arthur Wiegall's "Life and Times of Cleopatra" in which it appears that Mr. Wiegall has omitted none of the colorful gossip and anecdota of the contemporary and later Roman writers, and has written a very spicy biography of the glamorous serpent of Old Nile. This led us into a discussion of Cæsar, Antony and Cicero. My disrespect for Cicero dates from my first encounter with his letters to Atticus, and by the same token my admiration for Cæsar as a man deepened from the evidence of these letters; for, although Cicero was to Cæsar's face Cæsar's friend, he was in reality his most vindictive and double-dealing enemy, and even in trying to picture Cæsar as a tyrannical and dangerous man, the evidence he offers in support shows Cæsar to be magnanimous, a man of honor, and perhaps a bit too naïve and noble for his own good.



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ANECDOTES ABOUT T. S. ELIOT

Saturday, August 23.

With Hazel to Seward Collin's near New Canaan last night, and Ernest and Madelaine Boyd and John Peale Bishop came out to-day. Bishop is back from two years' residence abroad and he brought back a number of anecdotes, two of which concern T. S. Eliot. Lady Rothermere had given a literary and artistic tea party and a great number of lions had turned out. A much impressed American visitor asked Eliot if he didn't think the party was very interesting. "Yes," he replied, "if you concentrate on the essential horror of the thing." Marie Laurencin, the French painter was there, and when she was introduced to Eliot, she stared at Eliot in blank puzzlement and said:

"Eliot? Eliot? Eliot, the writer? But they told me you were a woman."

"No, I assure you the facts are otherwise," replied Eliot, who looks like an Arrow Collar man.

"But, surely I can't be mistaken. I was given to understand you were a woman," persisted Mlle. Laurencin.

"No! No! I have known myself quite a long time and I am quite convinced that I am not and have never been a woman."

"But aren't you George Eliot?"

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That happy self-sufficiency of the French which keeps them in almost complete ignorance of what is going on outside of France and the least touched of people by alien influences was a subject of discussion for some time, during which Boyd accounted for the special quality of the

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French genius by that self-sufficiency. The difference between the great French literary genius and the great English literary genius, he said, is that the French genius is completely identified with the French bourgeoisie and reflects the middle-class Frenchman's mind and point of view raised to the *n*th degree, whereas the English literary genius is a biological and psychological "sport" and has nothing in common with the middle and lower class Englishman's ideas or interests.

This went on until Bishop and I had gone for a swim and was resumed at dinner and continued until after midnight. Honor Leeming and Morton Banks dropped in during the evening.

Once we got into an argument over T. S. Eliot's "The Sacred Wood," a book which had seemed to me a dull enunciation of esthetic principles which his own poetry (which I rank highly) completely denied. Bishop said that though Eliot's essays didn't do much toward elucidating or evaluating "Hamlet," "The Jew of Malta," Swinburne or any of the subjects Eliot discussed, they did throw much light upon the poetic problems Eliot has set himself to solve. These problems are, according to Bishop, of emotional content and what Clive Bell, for convenience, called "significant form." "Eliot starts out with the theory," said Bishop, "that the poet who is an artist is not concerned with the commonplace emotions or with commonplace methods of evoking them, nor is he concerned with his own personal emotions. He seeks to provoke in a sensitive reader a pure æsthetic emotion, similar to the emotion produced by the best music or the best painting, an emotion least identified with petty personal emotions in which remembered events, sentimental scenes, carnal appetites, and so forth are all mixed up."

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Boyd, who cares not at all for "The Sacred Wood" and thinks that Eliot's poetry is "merely amusing" was less concerned with any other points of the discussion than with a mistake in French idiom in a parody of Tristan Corbière's "Mélagne Adultère de Tout," which Eliot had written in French. Richard Aldington, in an essay on Eliot in a new book just published, says that Eliot's poem is better than Corbière's, which, of course, is silly, and would surprise Eliot very much if he heard it; but until I pointed out to Boyd that Eliot could not be held responsible for what some one else had written about him, the mistake in French aroused Boyd's animosity against Eliot to a very high degree. He is quite right, of course, to say that people who do not know enough French to avoid making simple mistakes of grammar should hesitate about writing poems in French; but, after all, it is no crime, really, and if he is going to insist upon correct grammar and perfect idiom we would have to throw out a great deal of modern poetry written in English by Englishmen and Americans—which Boyd would do, eagerly enough.



CROSS-WORD PUZZLES

Sunday, August 24.

While Ernest read back numbers of *El Sol* and *The London Times*, Seward and I solved one and a half cross-word puzzles, acquiring a momentary knowledge of some outlandish words which neither of us would ever think of employing in speech or in writing. It is an insidious and amusing way to kill time, but the idea that "it in-

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creases your vocabulary" or that "it is educational," which puzzle fiends tell me, is nonsense. The words you don't already know when you are solving the puzzles are words you want to forget as soon as possible—unless, of course, like Carl Van Vechten, you enjoy using such words as "egrimony," "pinguid," "ipitumetic," "moriegation," "sciapodus" and "oppugnancy."



MARCEL SCHWOB'S SCHOLARSHIP

Monday, August 25.

Marcel Schwob's "Imaginary Lives" has been translated from the French by Lorimer Hammond and published by Horace Liveright. Schwob, who died last year, was, like Charles Whibley, an unusual combination of a man who knew books and who knew life also. That is rare; for the man in the street and the man in the library rarely meet, and when they do meet they even less rarely understand each other. The lives of most classical scholars are given up to quarrels with other classical scholars over the exact meaning of words and the proper reading of corrupt texts. If they translate Petronius or Herondas, their translations will be jejune and bloodless, for the only passion they have felt since forgotten youth is the passion for dispute—over codices and enclitics, textual readings and incunabula—and it would surprise and even horrify them to know that the life depicted by those ancient writers is not remote in time like the Trojan war, but all about them in the great urban communities. Whibley comes to books from having kept his eyes and ears open in the tavern and the street; there is a sanguine and unpolished quality about

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his classical studies, the quality of a man who is more interested in the spectacle of human life than in purely literary matters.

Schwob's interest in the Greek and Roman classics is much the same as Whibley's except that Schwob is a poet and a psychologist. He hunts for keys to character in minor significances. The things he likes in Aubrey's "Lives of Eminent Men" are such bits of information as that which tells us that Ben Jonson wore a cloak "like a cabman's, with vents under the armpits." When Schwob writes an imaginary biographical sketch of a historical personage, he leaves out precisely the things the usual historian and the usual story teller emphasize. His sketches are neither lurid nor dramatic; they are carefully understated, with subtle overtones.

Fully to appreciate these "Imaginary Lives" requires a certain familiarity with classical literature, even though a lack of such familiarity does not preclude enjoyment of them as delicate little ironies of life. A case in point is the sketch called "Clodia." The full significance of the sketch depends upon the reader's knowledge that Clodia was the mistress celebrated and (when she proved faithless) anathemized by the poet Catullus; and it is characteristic of Schwob that he should refer to Catullus but twice and most casually, as one of several men who took Clodia's fancy for a brief—and to her, unmomentous—period. To appreciate the full poignancy of the concluding lines, "She was known in those cellars frequented by scullions and teamsters. She waited on the curb for any man who passed," one must have in mind the terrible and heartbreaking "Caeli, Lesbia nostra, Lesbia illa, illa Lesbia. . . ." and the gay, tender, and passionate poems which preceded it. But, like Clodia, Schwob finds Catul-

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lus unimportant in this sketch except as an overtone; for Schwob is interested in the essential Clodia as she revealed herself to the dispassionate observer, not the Clodia of Catullus's impassioned imagination. By bringing her thus to life in his pages he realizes the intention he declared to be the ideal of biography—"The establishing of connections between individual facts and general actions," and the "discovery of some unique trait distinguishing that man forever among men." Schwob accounts for Clodia and the tragedy of her nature by a remarkable stroke of creative imagination. Schwob is unique as an artist; and though not many will be likely to care deeply for his subtle and exquisitely wrought little life stories, the publishers have done a service by making "Imaginary Lives" available in English.

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Conrad collectors will have to buy willy-nilly a new novel by Warrington Dawson, called "Adventure in the Night," containing a foreword by the late Joseph Conrad. The foreword is very short, to be sure, and sounds more like an excerpt from a personal letter to a young author who had dedicated his book to Conrad, but short or long it constitutes a genuine Conrad "item." Conrad's first paragraph reads: "You can do anything you like, I believe. Your individuality will make your work. Remember that in the end value will tell—and you are giving value."

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And now, dear patients, au revoir!



PARISIAN EPILOGUE

I COULD see now why they told us to take the train out from the St. Lazare station instead of taking the shorter route from the Gare des Invalides; for when we descended from the railway carriage wherein for a few sous extra we had been privileged to enjoy the luxury of spacious exclusiveness (for no one else entered our carriage) and the *ton* of an antimacassar marked rather blatantly "Etat," we saw we were on the high ridge of St. Cloud. Through a mist thick as the air of the steam-room of a Turkish bath and sixty degrees cooler we could make out roofs and chimneys below us. If we had come the other way we should have had to climb that precipice by way of the tedious stone stairs that ascend interminably under dank culverts and somehow reach tortuously this elevation on which we are now standing. The MacLeishs can't live far from here, I said aloud to Hazel; nor could they, for three pairs of pant legs strode toward us and one of them emerged through the fog as a whole form and voice and shouted, "Ah, there you are! We won't take a cab, for the house is only up the road a step. Mrs. Rascoe, allow me to present Mr. Cummings and Mr. MacLeish. Mr. Rascoe, Mr. MacLeish; you've met Cummings."

It was Lewis Galantière greeting and introducing. He's bipedal, bifocal, and bilingual. At this moment he wears plus-fours, which accentuate his bipedality; his thick lens spectacles are sweating, which accentuates his bifocality; and he is talking Middle-Westernese and Emily Post and

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I know he has just translated Jean Cocteau's *Le grand écart* and *Thomas l'Imposteur*, which accentuates his bilinguality.

MacLeish is a clear-eyed, deferential young man, with an extremely Nordic head, quiet manners, and an ungovernable passion for discussing æsthetics—æsthetics in the round, in the general, in the specific, in the concrete—any way so long as it is æsthetics. He has not yet made up his mind whether to go free verse whole hog or none; and his pansy-like book of verse suffers from this indecision. But he is a fine lad—one can call him a lad even if he has got a boy of seven who is a handsome youngster and bright as a whip; and a wife who is charming American “quality”; and lives in a mansion fitted out in luxurious bad taste with padded damask covered walls, by a Russian prince, now down on his luck, for a mistress who enjoyed the imported American plumbing of the bathroom for three months before the crash came. Yes, he is a fine lad and a brave one. While he was yet under thirty he had achieved as much success in law as that by which the most tolerable of the “How I Became a Success” yarns tempt the gullible wage-slave; and with enough money in the bank to keep him going for some years, he threw over the law, went to Paris, reduced his expenditures (he gets the ex-prince's mansion furnished and two servants for less than \$150 a month), and started out being a poet. That accounts for his extraordinary preoccupation with æsthetics. If you or I were to take up law we shouldn't jump right in and try a case; we should probably be rather irritatingly and persistently concerned with torts and evidence, and so forth and so on.

Galantière gets Hazel between us and we clop over the cobble stones and squash through the ooze of a poplar-

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lined avenue. Galantière is solicitous of Hazel's feet and I'm not; for she had just said to Cummings, "I like your *lyrical* poetry," which is like saying to a poet "I like your *left* ear" and implying that his right ear leaves much to be desired. Strange though, she said just what I feel, though perhaps less felicitously and more directly than I, in my brashest and most cock-sure mood, should be able to express it. Coming out on the train I had been counting up our lyric poets of the first order since Poe—Emily Dickinson, yes, on the evidence of two or three lyrics alone—Sarah Teasdale, darn near it, darn near first rank anyhow, maybe first rank—Edna St. Vincent Millay, absolutely, because she is one of the few poets who have been able to breathe life into the sonnet since Shakespeare; Arthur Ficke is another, and Cummings! But we'll come to him—Wallace Stevens for a certainty; remember his "Mother of heaven, regina of the clouds, O sceptre of the sun, crown of the moon, There is not nothing, no no, never nothing, Like the clashed edges of two words that kill"? and all his other music?—and there's Conrad Aiken, ecstatically and imperishably lyrical when you excavate—and T. S. Eliot, poet-laureate and elegist of the jazz age, the sophisticated, intellectualized minnesinger of post-war fatigue and disillusion of 1918 and so on,—Ezra Pound; now Pound's a talent, but has he written more than one lyric (you know, we're talking about lyrics not epigrams after Martial and Catullus, valuable and worthy as they are), has he written more than one lyric? Put him down anyway—Comes then who? Sandburg, Bodenheim, Lindsay, Masters, Lowell (Amy), Kreymborg?—let's keep Kreymborg in, if only in memory of the tightening about my heart and the expansion about my head when I heard "Earth Wisdom" recited for the first time with the ac-

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companiment of the mandolite; the others are among my favorites but they are, as Herbert Gorman would say, cerebral; so let's keep them out of the lyrical group. Robinson, Wheelock. . . .

Who remains? Who indeed, but the chap we're to meet this afternoon. If there is a finer lyricist since Keats and Swinburne (I include them both), forgetting Yeats, in the English language I wish you would introduce me to him. Uneven? Yes, I grant you! So was God—look at Ben Turpin and the Siamese Twins! Even He is always experimenting and sometimes turning out things more fascinating than tasteful. Even He is more radical and revolutionary and whimsical than that of printing the first person singular with a lower case "i"—look at His turning out a man like Volstead. Take it all in all, or all in little, Cummings's poetry, the best of it, is beauty like a lark's song or the Ode on a Grecian Urn or any other danged thing you please. I won't argue the case any more. When our myopic literary birchmen finally gutter out in the grease of their own stupidities, when the geoffreys have left their parsonage and all the reeds are broken and the putnams have ceased to put—then milady, my dear lady, America will have discovered that it has some poets and Cummings will be mighty-tighty among the lot. . . .

Cummings gripped the arm-rest of his chair before the fire. His mouth was taut and sullen under a blond toothbrush mustache. His head was thrown back challengingly as always except when he is being courteous to a lady. There was the fire of passionate conviction in his eye. "Poets and artists, especially in America, make me sick," he said. "What right has such a beggar to take on airs? I have no more interest in or respect for a man because he can write a poem or paint a picture that will hang in

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the Louvre than I have for a man because he can fix the plumbing or design a beautiful motor car. Crossing the Place de la Concorde this morning I saw a Rolls-Royce car with a body that was a thing of grace, beauty and utility. Some one designed it. Some one who is a genius, an artist, much more an artist than I am, because it is not only a beautiful thing, it runs, and not only does it run, but it is useful and in demand, and the man who designed it can make a living out of his design.

"I am a poet, true enough; but what right have I to be proud of my disease? It's such a shabby, idiotic disease. You know what I want? Money, comfort, love, ease, luxury, the price in my pocket for theater tickets and good wine. What do I do to go about getting them? I sit up in a shabby room, shivering with the cold, and use my imagination to keep me warm, thinking about the South Sea Islands and the tropical swamps. Your plumber wouldn't do that. He has more sense. He would go out and get some coal and wood to make a fire. He wouldn't sit there and freeze and try to imagine he was warm. I make poems because it is the thing I know how to do best. In fact, it is about the only thing I know how to do. America doesn't want poems badly enough to make it a profitable business to be engaged in. That's America's privilege. If you don't need something you would be a fool to buy it. If a fellow comes to my door and tries to sell me a hand-made butter churn, I send him away because I don't need a churn. What do I want with a churn? I haven't any cow or any milk and I buy my butter at the dairy store around the corner. I am in the position of a fellow trying to sell flat-dwellers butter churns which they have no need for.

"But I'd be a fool, a worse fool than I am, if I imagined

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that I was a superior and precious sort of being because I went around trying to peddle butter churns that nobody wanted. Poets and artists are unfortunate persons trying to capitalize their neuroses. They get a shabby sort of satisfaction out of thinking themselves superior to people who are able to adjust themselves to life. I know, because I used to be that way myself. Since I got hep to myself, I have seen what an ingrown, puny lot poets are. I'd rather listen to a group of paper box manufacturers talk about their business than to hear poets talk about theirs—the box manufacturers at least know their business from the ground up."

This monologue continued for two hours—a steady stream of it. I have caught here only the gist of it. The monologue itself was brilliant, elaborated with the most startling images and the most laughable conceits. We roared with laughter. Mrs. MacLeish suggested dinner at a little restaurant about a quarter of a mile away. Cummings suggested another round of cognac. We took the middle of the road, arm linked in arm. Cummings continued, a coruscating cascade of unrelated or only slightly related images, poetic tags, remembered lines in Greek, French, Latin, German, and English. At one point he convulsed us with a recital of a whole episode from "Hiawatha," with a sententiousness which made the banality of that banal poem insupportable. Then . . .

*"Poikilothron athanat Aphrodita
Pai Dios doloploka lissomai se
Me m'asaisi med'oniaisī damna
Potnia, thumon—*

"noblest poem, messieurs, noblest poem ever written—

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*"J'ai fermé ma porte à l'orage
Il pleut fort sur les arbres verts,
Je me sens une âme de sage
Et rien n'est beau que les beaux vers—*

"not always though, not always—

. . . quoid id faciam, fortasse requiris. Nescio sed fieri sentio et excrucior. . . . It is not snowing snow, you know; it's snowing but-ter-cups! And there we were, the crew of us, sailing through the air at the rate of 300 miles or the equivalent in parasangs and kilometers per hour in the good ship *Galapagos* on our way to the Canary Islands. And there was poor old Wilson pounding the table at Versailles without a chance of being heard. He couldn't talk French, you know, not a single word of French. What chance did he have? Poor soul and I knew Mrs. Peck—charming woman; don't believe all the stories you hear about her,—and our rations getting lower and lower all the time until we were living on pemmican and unicorns, one tablespoon full every three hours.' It relieves the congestion in the lungs and tones up the body, and be sure to open your windows at night. When without a word of warning what should happen but the whole hulk burst in flames and David Wark Griffith not standing by the shores of Gitchee-gumme, by the shining big sea waters, where he used to paddle his own canoe, a birch bark canoe, guaranteed not to rust, leak or upset, children cry for it, women die for it, going going gone, did I hear seventy-five, soixante-quinze, sold to the gentleman in the corner over there . . ."

Again I must plead my inability to convey, and my hope to suggest, the quality of this fantastic rigmarole. Eight

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solid hours of it, to my hearing, and never a repetition, scarcely ever a break in the flow of unconnected images, all like the dissolving lights of a kaleidoscope. And MacLeish said he had kept it up all afternoon.

"Batty as a bed-bug," I sententiate to Archie. "If he keeps on that way he'll blow up. Nervous depression sometimes causes that sort of talking sickness. Read about a girl once who talked steadily for fourteen hours. Had some sort of pressure against the spine or the brain, I forget which. Ring Lardner does some of that Dada stuff now and then, mixing up ideas and images which have no logical connection. But Lardner's delivery is slow and deliberative. Cummings's is a rataplan. I have never known any one who could think so quick."

"And his memory is astounding," said MacLeish. "I've heard about Swinburne memorizing and declaiming whole Greek tragedies and Hugo knowing the Iliad by heart and all that. What a bore it must have been to listen to them! I'll bet there was a rush for the exits at the Savage Club whenever Swinburne looked as if he might burst into a recital of Edipus Rex in the original any moment. But Cummings is different. I have never been so royally entertained in my life. His mood changes. One melts into the other, tenderness into comicality, burlesque into profundity, snatches of Heine alternating with Rimbaud, advertising catch-lines tied up with Catullus and Longfellow. Funny thing he knows yards and yards of Tennyson and Longfellow by heart." . . .

The illuminated disk in the tower of the Gare St. Lazare said one-thirty, and I was a rag from listening; but Cummings wanted to go somewhere and dance.

"Count me out!" said Galantière, "I have to be at work

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at nine in the morning. Paris for you fellows is a pleasure resort. For me it's where I earn my living."

"It's funny I never thought of that," said Cummings. "Somehow you never seem to associate Paris and a job. Think of having a job in Paris! What a quaint idea! But having a job anywhere would be a quaint idea for me, least of all in Paris. Did I say an idea? Why, it would be a godsend! Do you know where I can get a job, any little job—in Paris, Andalusia, New York, or Hong-Kong? I hereby apply for any little job that may be floating around. All I require of the job is that it shall not be eleemosynary. It must pay me enough for a bed, cognac and cheese—and, oh, yes! a ticket fortnightly for the Bal Tabarin and two sous for the vestiare. Vestiaries must live. Two sous for the vestiare. That's all I ask."

I live the furthest away. Cummings the closest. He asks to be dropped at a corner; but he tells this to the driver. Galantière explains in a whisper that he is sensitive about the street he lives in and won't give his address. We swing around the Etoile with its flickering perpetual flame over the grave of the Unknown Soldier under the Arch of Triumph, and in a moment there is an argument with the driver who rolls his "r's," and the concierge peers out in a disapproval which means a tip of five francs.

THE END

